

IN FROM THE COLD? BRITISH FASCISM AND THE MAINSTREAM PRESS 1925-39

JANET ELIZABETH DACK

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Teesside University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2010

Contents

Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
List of Abbreviations.....	5
Introduction.....	6
Chapter 1. BEYOND THE PALE? – Attitudes towards domestic Antisemitism.....	37
Chapter 2. CAUTIOUSLY DOES IT – Attitudes to German Antisemitism and Jewish Refugees.....	82
Chapter 3. DEMONISATION OF THE LEFT AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR.....	127
Chapter 4. MINDING BRITAIN’S BUSINESS.....	161
Chapter 5. DECADENCE, DECLINE, AND RENEWAL - British cultural perceptions.....	213
Chapter. 6 MEDIA RESPONSES TO MOSLEY AND THE BUF...	275
Conclusion.....	312
Bibliography.....	321

ABSTRACT

For a more complete understanding of the significance of fascism in inter-war Britain, it is important to consider the extent to which fascist views were an expression or extension of existing mainstream views. This thesis uses original research to examine how far the promotion of fascist views converged with mainstream opinion and identifies the issues on which British fascists went beyond the acceptable boundaries of mainstream society.

Examining attitudes to antisemitism, refugees, the left, continental dictatorship and appeasement, culture, and, finally, the response of the mainstream press to the British Union of Fascists (BUF) and their reaction to what they perceived as a conspiracy against them, the thesis explores the possibility that there is a sufficient area of discursive overlap to locate British fascists within the mainstream.

Significantly, comparison of the British fascist press and mainstream newspapers reveals that, while there were considerable areas of overlapping discourse, nonetheless, the underlying motivations of the fascists and the mainstream clearly differed. With one notable yet brief exception, the majority of the mainstream press regarded British fascists as belonging to the political margins and, increasingly, British fascism and the BUF in particular, defined itself in counter-cultural opposition to the mainstream.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First I must thank my supervisors, Nigel Copsey, Graham Ford, and Colin Holmes for their patience and support. Thanks are also due to Dan Tilles and to Ron Brown for their constructive criticism, and to Matthew Feldman for sound advice. Melanie Devine deserves more than mere thanks for deploying her proof reading skills on my behalf.

Secondly, I am grateful for the unfailing helpfulness of the staff at the British Newspaper Library at Colindale. I would also like to thank staff at the library of Teesside University.

Thirdly, I extend my gratitude to Teesside University for providing funding to cover some of the necessary research trips, and for the understanding and support provided when domestic difficulties delayed completion.

Finally, I could not have completed this thesis without the forbearance of my family and the encouragement of my husband. The intellectual and emotional support of the LWL has also been of enormous benefit.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, Ian William Bradshaw.

List of Abbreviations

BF	British Fascisti
BNP	British National Party
BU	British Union of Fascists and National Socialists
BUF	British Union of Fascists
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
EFT	Empire Free Trade
FO	Foreign Office
IFL	Imperial Fascist League
LRC	Labour Representation Committee
MRP	Municipal Reform Party
NSDAP	National Socialist German Workers' Party (<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i>)
SA	Storm Division (<i>Sturmabteilung</i>)

INTRODUCTION

It did not take the disgruntled right of British politics long to seek to emulate Mussolini's example of fascist national renewal. Alarmed by what they perceived as public apathy and the failure of post-war governments to respond to the dual threat of increasing national decline and imminent socialist revolution, they were attracted to the Fascist's creed of action. The first stirrings of fascism in Britain displayed little to distinguish it from the pre-existing radical right, but later developments saw the adoption of fascist policies and the evolution of an ideology that drew on British traditions as well as fascist principles. Despite some limited success, fascism in Britain failed and much of the historiographical debate has concentrated on identifying the reasons for that failure.¹ Richard Thurlow identified three strands within the historiography: comparisons between British fascist movements and Nazism, studies of fascism as a utopian movement and the analysis of British fascism in terms of fascist/anti-fascist confrontation.² Until recently, existing research on British fascism has focussed on the 'major players', electoral performance, and on the membership and organisation of fascist groups. This reflects a belief held by historians of British fascism that fresh understandings will emerge from more and more detail about the fascists themselves. However, whilst this detail is important, it is symptomatic of what Kenneth Lunn called a 'failure of imagination' and a preoccupation with it limits our understanding of the impact of British fascism on mainstream political and social life as well as on the lives of individuals.³

More recently, historians have begun to adopt a more imaginative approach and attention has focussed on the cultural issues bound up with fascism. This has provided some valuable insight; in particular the work of Martin Durham, Julie Gottlieb, Thomas Linehan and Dan Stone has provided both interest and

illumination.⁴ Yet, despite this recent widening of scope, there has been little attention paid to the ideology and attitudes of British fascists in relation to those of the mainstream. Tony Kushner has pointed to the ambiguity in British responses to fascism: ‘a mixture of fascination, repulsion, admiration and disgust’ in which fascism is identified as ‘other’ and, therefore, distanced from the mainstream, yet its image and symbols retain an aura of magnetism.⁵

Recently, Martin Pugh has suggested that there was common ground between British fascists and the Conservative right. Other historians have expressed similar opinions; Lunn highlighted the links between fascism and the Conservative party at a local level.⁶ Local studies by Todd Gray, Thomas Linehan, Nigel Todd, and David Turner support Lunn’s findings.⁷ Pugh also claims that far from being new or alien, the political ideas promoted by inter-war fascists were developments of previous British political thought.⁸ Likewise, both Neil Nugent and G. C. Webber have shown that other, earlier, right-wing groups had advocated similar economic and imperial policies to those of the BUF.⁹

To provide an effective analysis of the dynamics of the relationship of British fascism to the mainstream this thesis adopts a thematically driven approach. Its understanding of what constitutes the mainstream is not absolute, offering a more nuanced conception of the mainstream. The position of the mainstream is fluid, relative to the issue under consideration, and variable over time. On occasion the attitudes of the mainstream and the British fascists converge, but because the mainstream is mutable and fascist ideology lacks flexibility and abhors diversity, time and events see them once more at variance.

What we perceive as the mainstream can also be described in political terms as the centre. Uwe Backes’ conceptual analysis of political extremism considers the

relationship between the extremes of 'left' and 'right' and their relationship to the centre, and notes that the Aristotelian tradition regards the centre as embodying the principles of moderation. In political terms the centre provides a solid and balanced foundation for an effective political system that incorporates elements from a variety of forms of government and facilitates the interaction of a host of social forces and differing interests.¹⁰

More recent definitions of extremism recognise a core formed by political absolutism and monopolist refusal to tolerate the existence of opposing ideologies. Backes relates this to an understanding of extremism as 'rejecting the minimum conditions of democratic constitutional states.'¹¹ This interpretation would place British fascism outside of the mainstream. However, Backes gives some theoretical underpinning to claims that there were areas of common ground between the mainstream and the fascists when he concedes that 'the centre contains something of the extremes.'¹²

This thesis extends our understanding of the significance of fascism in Britain and of its relations with mainstream perceptions. Firstly, it differentiates the mainstream and extreme positions for a variety of significant issues. Secondly, it considers the extent to which fascist views were an expression or extension of existing mainstream views. Thirdly, it identifies the issues on which British fascists went beyond the acceptable boundaries of mainstream society. Finally, where fascist discourse converges with that of the mainstream the significance of that convergence is examined to establish if the underlying motivation is the same, or whether the similarity of language masks different agendas. Using the mainstream and fascist press in a way that has not been attempted before, this thesis explores the nature of British fascism and locates its place in British political and cultural thought.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology supporting this thesis relies largely on qualitative research based on thematic identification of articles relating to the issues that are central to the thesis: antisemitism, refugees, the left, foreign affairs, culture, and mainstream responses to the BUF. These issues were selected as they had been identified as significant within the historiography of British fascism.

Other qualitative approaches, most notably Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), were rejected as being most suited to a detailed study of a small quantity of textual extracts. CDA generally involves the selection of a few ‘typical texts’; the rationale behind the selection process is notoriously difficult to justify and frequently remains vague.¹³ While Robert de Beaugrande considers that an analysis of discourse is key to understanding a culture, he acknowledges that it is not realistic to expect CDA to provide a complete analysis.¹⁴ CDA is more usually used to explore the relations of power and dominance, and to analyse how social inequality is represented and legitimised by the use of language.¹⁵ Additionally, CDA relies strongly on the use of linguistic categories, and topics and content are less significant than is usual in historical analysis.¹⁶ Nonetheless, some of the tools of CDA are useful and, where relevant, this thesis considers the use of techniques such as framing, tone, modality and agency in the articles being analysed.

Similarly, the use of quantitative content analysis was considered and rejected. The advantages of quantitative analysis include the use of statistical procedures to show patterns in texts, reducing textual material to more manageable bits of data, making comparisons easier. If coding is sufficiently rigorous, the method offers a high level of reproducibility and reliability.¹⁷ However, in order to ensure reliability it is

necessary for different individuals to repeat the coding of the texts. It can be difficult to achieve reliability when coding texts that are longer or more complex than a simple sentence, and semantic validity can be lost if words in the text have more than one meaning.¹⁸ The process of quantitative analysis is labour intensive and, given the number of newspapers studied for this thesis, it would have been impossible to justify the use of the necessary resources as the level of coding necessary to analyse the issues discussed in this thesis would be very complex and the end result, divorced from the content and context of the text, may have lost much of its meaning.

Sources I: The Fascist Press

Any attempt to examine the ideological concerns of British fascism is predicated on the understanding that fascism has an ideology, an argument made convincingly by George Mosse, Zeev Sternhell, Stanley Payne, Roger Eatwell, and Roger Griffin, who all consider fascism as having an ideology with a strong revolutionary thrust.¹⁹ Traditionally, Marxist analysis has rejected this argument and Dave Renton has combined a restatement of the Trotskyist perspective of fascism with an attack on 'liberal historians', particularly Griffin.²⁰ Despite Renton's misgivings there is sufficient unanimity to justify Griffin's claim that a consensus has been reached around a definition of fascism as:

a genus of modern, revolutionary, mass politics which, while extremely heterogeneous in its social support and in the specific ideology promoted by its many permutations, draws its internal cohesion and driving force from a core myth that a period of perceived national decline and decadence is giving way to one of rebirth and renewal in a post-liberal new order.²¹

Having accepted that fascist movements are capable of developing an ideology, it is possible to consider the ideological evolution of British fascism in connection with the policies and political programmes of individual movements. The

restrictions of space allow for only the three most significant of the British fascist movements to be considered here. These movements began their ideological development in different ways, but, by the mid-1930s their policy and propaganda statements had much in common. The British Fascists (BF) was the first of the British movements, closely followed by the Imperial Fascist League (IFL) which was founded to provide a more overtly fascist programme than that of the BF, and finally the British Union of Fascists (BUF) which generated the most public support and produced the most detailed political programme. Although there were other fascist movements, such as the National Fascisti, they tended to be short-lived and insignificant in terms of both numbers and impact.²²

The majority of contributors to the historiography of British fascism have located the BF, founded in May 1923 by Rotha Lintorn-Orman, as part of the reactionary right-wing and Roger Eatwell, David Lewis, Richard Thurlow, and G. C. Webber, are notable among those who find little that is fascist in the policy and propaganda of the BF. This was a view shared by many of the BF's members, who left to join other more robustly fascist organisations. One former member, Arnold Leese, who was one of two elected fascist councillors in Stamford, left the BF in 1926 and later become one of the founders of the IFL. He regarded the BF as dedicated to preserving the *status quo* rather than the founding of a fascist state and described it as 'merely Conservatism with Knobs On.'²³ Brigadier General Robert B. D. Blakeney, who had been president of the BF, also left during 1926 as did Rear Admiral A. E. Armstrong and the Earl of Glasgow. Together they set up the British Loyalists, a body that had no overtly fascist characteristic and did not challenge parliamentary democracy. Blakeney later joined Leese in the IFL before moving on to the BUF.²⁴

Although Kenneth Lunn has argued that the historiography underrates the significance of the BF, it appears that, particularly in its early years, it was closer to Seymour Lipset's assessment of fascism as a reaction of the middle classes intent on holding back the process of modernisation, in which socialism was a strong force, rather than to a revolutionary movement as defined by Griffin's 'new consensus'.²⁵ Pugh suggests that during the 1920s BF policy closely matched that of many right-wing Conservatives, but argues against dismissing the BF as marginal and eccentric.²⁶ As the 1920s drew to a close the BF adopted policies more in line with fascist thinking. Thomas Linehan, notes that from 1927 the ideology of the BF became 'more distinctly fascist', a process that continued into the early 1930s until its dissolution in September 1935. Yet, he also points out that the BF lacked certain aspects of an authentic fascist ideology, including a rebirth mythology, an irrationalist anti-positivist culture, and an interest in spiritual transcendence and the philosophy of fascism.²⁷ So, while it would be difficult to claim that the BF was indisputably fascist it is clear that its policy, and its press, contained manifestly fascistic elements. For this reason it is important to include the BF press in any analysis of the ideological development of British fascism.

The BF published three newspapers between June 1925 and June 1934, though during the final eighteen months production was intermittent, due to the successful intimidation of the BF's printers by members of the BUF, financial difficulties and the internal difficulties experienced following a series of defections to the BUF.²⁸ The *Fascist Bulletin*, edited by Blakeney, appeared weekly between 13 June 1925 and 12 June 1926. It was superseded by *British Lion*, a monthly paper edited by E. G. Manderville Roe, from June 1926 to June

1930. The first issue of *British Fascism* appeared in June 1930 and was also edited by Manderville Roe, until his defection to the BUF in May 1932. Mrs D. G. Harnett, member of the Grand Council and Commander of the BF's Ulster Command, edited the next two issues, which appeared in October 1932 and February 1933. There was then a hiatus caused by an attack on the BF headquarters by around 60 uniformed BUF members and the threatening of the movement's printers.²⁹ Publication resumed with the 'Special Summer Propaganda Issue', which announced that from August 1933 the paper would be under the joint editorship of Harnett and G. E. Eyre.³⁰ Nothing further was published until the 'Extra Autumn' edition, edited by Eyre, following which publication was again suspended, this time due to financial difficulties, until March 1934 when Colonel H. C. Bruce Wilson, who had guaranteed the BF's overdraft, became editor for the remaining four months of the paper's existence.³¹ The premature death of its founder in March 1935 was a further blow to the BF and by September 1935 the movement was disbanded.

A large part of the historiography regards Leese and the IFL as marginal, overshadowed by Mosley and the BUF with whom they struggled to compete for recruits and resources.³² Both the IFL and BF were dismissed by Thurlow:

No-one wastes any time in explaining why such quixotic and eccentric movements as the British Fascisti in the 1920s and the Imperial Fascist League in the 1930s were minute elements on the political fringes.³³

However, others such as Michael Billig, John Morell and Nugent, while noting the minor role played by Leese and the IFL in inter-war politics, consider that, in the longer term, their ideology has influenced the post-war extreme right.³⁴ Leese feared that allowing other 'less developed' races to live on terms of equality with Britons would lead to the disappearance of the British race and its culture.³⁵ This seems very

similar to recent claims by British National Party (BNP) leader, Nick Griffin, that London is no longer a British city and the English and British people have 'been ethnically cleansed from their own country.'³⁶

Although the IFL was a small organisation with a membership in the low hundreds, Linehan notes it attracted several prominent figures associated with British fascism and had a more coherent ideology and was more markedly fascist than many other groups during the inter-war period. The belief in Nordic supremacy and the development of theories of racial antisemitism provided a mythic core around which Leese arranged his policies of anti-democracy, anti-liberalism, anti-socialism, preservation of the Empire, the revitalisation of agriculture, and commitment to the corporate state.³⁷ While both organisations expressed loyalty to the king, the IFL, unlike the BF, was not seeking merely to maintain the old order against modernism and socialism, but to create a new social order.³⁸

The IFL produced only one newspaper, the *Fascist*. Published monthly, the first edition appeared in March 1929 and the last in September 1939. Throughout this time the paper was edited by Leese, except for the period October 1936 to March 1937 when C. F. Trueman acted as editor while Leese was in Wormwood Scrubs serving six months following his conviction for conspiring to create a public mischief. Leese was released in February 1937, his sentence being reduced for good behaviour, and returned to the paper to edit the April edition. The *Fascist* had a print-run of 3,000 but, according to Thurlow, 1,000 of these were bought by a Mr Pope, living in Porthcawl. What he did with them is unknown. A large number were also sent to South Africa.³⁹

The most notable of the British fascist movements was the BUF, founded by Oswald Mosley in October 1932. While the BUF failed to achieve any electoral

success, historians have come to regard it as ‘intellectually the most coherent and rational’ fascist party in Europe.⁴⁰ Initially, Mosley attempted to negotiate mergers with both the BF and IFL, but, although he was successful in poaching much of the active membership of the BF, both Lintorn Orman and Leese distrusted him and argued vigorously against joining the BUF. Relations deteriorated to such an extent that in 1933 BUF members attacked the headquarters of the BF and later that year disrupted a meeting of the IFL at which Leese and Blakeney were beaten up and debagged.⁴¹ The popular image of the BUF is closely associated with political violence and antisemitism, but its policies were detailed and pragmatic. Linehan has described the BUF as the child of the 1929-31 economic crisis, which defined most of its economic and political policies, but also acknowledges the philosophical and irrational elements in its ideology that were derived from continental influences.⁴² The conflict between practical politics and the spiritual and philosophical elements of the BUF’s ideology was never satisfactorily reconciled, organisation was hampered by factional struggles, and the cost of maintaining the BUF’s staff and headquarters became more than Mosley could resource. Improving economic conditions and increasing public distaste for the BUF’s reputation for violence and antisemitism led to a decline in members that was not reversed until the threat of war revived interest in the BUF’s peace campaign. Nonetheless, the BUF attracted the largest membership of all the inter-war fascist groups in Britain, and it impinged most noticeably on the public consciousness as well as attracting the most determined opposition.⁴³ The BUF changed its name to the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists in April 1936, but generally called itself British Union (BU).⁴⁴ For convenience the movement will be referred to as the BUF throughout this thesis.

The BUF newspapers were more ambitious in scope and had much larger circulation than the BF and IFL. The *Blackshirt* was first published in February 1933 as a monthly paper; in April 1933 it became a weekly publication up until January 1938 when it ceased weekly publication. From March 1938 the *Blackshirt* resumed production as a monthly paper and continued until August 1938 when publication as a national newspaper ceased and three regional editions were introduced. For the period September 1938 to March 1939 the sources used here are taken from the *Southern Blackshirt*, and for April and May 1939 from the *East London Blackshirt*. The *Blackshirt* was aimed at a working class readership.⁴⁵ Much of its content was directed at existing members. Circulation fluctuated. By 1934 the paper was selling 25,000 copies a month; sales fell in 1935 to around 23,000.⁴⁶ Internal struggles within the BUF led to several changes of editor. Captain Charles Lewis and W. J. Leaper, previously a member of the Labour party, were early occupants of the editor's chair. They were succeeded by Rex Tremlett, who resigned in 1936 and was replaced by John Beckett, a former Labour MP who had followed Mosley in to the New Party and then the BUF.⁴⁷ Beckett was dismissed in March 1937 and Geoffrey Dorman edited the paper from April to July 1937 when A. K. Chesterton became editor until January 1938, after which he gave up the editorship to concentrate on *Action*.⁴⁸ There were no issues of *Blackshirt* published in February 1938. Geoffrey Dorman became editor of the monthly paper again from March to April 1938, between May and July *Blackshirt* again had no editor and Michael Goulding took over in August 1938.⁴⁹ In September the paper was re-organised into three regional editions, though Goulding remained as national editor. The regional editors were William Luckin for the *Southern Blackshirt*, T. C. Waters for the *East London Blackshirt*, and Michael Tracey for the *Northern Blackshirt*.⁵⁰

The BUF was also anxious to capture a wider public and introduced the short-lived *Fascist Week*, which had slightly more intellectual pretensions and, between November 1933 and May 1934, achieved a circulation of up to 30,000 copies a week.⁵¹ During the late 1930s there were increasing concerns within the BUF leadership that the *Blackshirt* was mediocre and unattractive to uncommitted readers.⁵² In January 1936 *Action*, edited by Beckett, was launched. With a format modelled on that of the mainstream newspapers, it targeted a more educated audience and sold around 26,000 copies a week.⁵³ Following Beckett's dismissal, Dorman, the paper's aviation expert 'Bluebird', acted as editor until February 1938 when Chesterton became editor until he resigned from the BUF in March 1938.⁵⁴ During Chesterton's brief reign Dorman was the assistant editor and Alexander Raven Thomson, the BUF's political Director, wrote the leader column.⁵⁵ From April 1938 to April 1939 Dorman edited the paper once more.⁵⁶ During April 1939 Raven Thomson took over the editorship until *Action* ceased production in June 1940.⁵⁷

The analysis of the fascist press in this thesis is based on 180 hours of study of microfilm copies of fascist papers held at Teesside University, augmented by materials held by the British Library. I have also relied on research into the IFL undertaken as an undergraduate using resources at the Special Collections and Archives Department of Sheffield University. Where relevant, my research has drawn on the works of influential individual fascists, such as Oswald Mosley and William Joyce.

Sources II: The Mainstream Press

During the inter-war period there were three major sources of mainstream news and opinion: the press, BBC radio broadcasts, and cinema newsreels. The press was by

far the most prolific and pervasive, and presented the most diverse range of opinion. By the end of the decade two-thirds of the population had regular access to a newspaper.⁵⁸ The analysis of British mainstream opinion, therefore, is based on the press. Due to the emphasis in the historiography on the overlap between the Conservative party and British fascism, particular attention has been paid to the Tory press.

The newspapers consulted during the course of this study can be classified in a variety of ways, for convenience they will be grouped here in terms either of their political leanings or their readership. During the 1930s the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail*, and, at the beginning of the decade, the *Daily Mirror* were allied to the Conservative party, though they often took issue with it on matters of policy. Although the *Observer* has a long history as a liberal paper, during the inter-war period it was edited by the maverick Tory, J. L. Garvin.⁵⁹ Under Garvin, the paper developed a distinctive voice that combined Tory values with an occasional cross-bench outlook.⁶⁰ Throughout the period, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *News Chronicle* espoused liberal principles, while the *Daily Herald* was financed by the Labour party and the Trades Union Congress.

The popular press, including the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Herald*, the *Daily Mail*, and the *Daily Mirror*, were mass circulation papers. By the early 1930s the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Herald* each had more than 2,000,000 readers, while the *Daily Mail*, which had been selling a similar number of papers in the 1920s, was losing readers and had a circulation of around 1,600,000. The *Daily Mirror* was also struggling; its circulation had fallen to below 800,000. However, after Lord Rothermere relinquished control, the paper implemented a successful long-term strategy to attract working-class readers and during the mid-1930s sales improved,

reaching 1,500,000 by 1939. The liberal *News Chronicle* had a circulation of 1,400,000.⁶¹

The quality press, papers such as the *Times* (circulation 187,000), the *Daily Telegraph* (200,000), the *Observer* (201,000), and the *Manchester Guardian* (45,000), had a smaller circulation but carried more political weight than the popular press. Their editors were more independent and suffered less interference from their proprietors than tended to be the case among the popular press. Although Lord Camrose was a working proprietor and Editor-in-Chief of the *Daily Telegraph*, he had a good working relationship with his editor, Arthur Watson. Many of the editors of the quality papers had close ties with members of the establishment and the Government. Geoffrey Dawson, the editor of the *Times*, was a close friend of Lord Halifax, a confidante of Neville Chamberlain and, along with H. A. Gwyne, of the *Morning Post* and J. L. Garvin of the *Observer*, encouraged and supported Chamberlain's policy of appeasement.⁶²

Although around 2,120 hours has been spent researching the mainstream press it has not been possible to read every issue of every mainstream paper published between 1925 and 1939, and research has been concentrated on a selection from the 'popular', 'quality' and 'liberal' press, in particular the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Times*. The *Manchester Guardian*, *Observer*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Herald*, *Evening Standard* and *Punch* have also been referred to in relation to specific topics.

The selection of articles for analysis was thematically driven. Editions of the selected papers have been read for the month or months in which significant events occurred, for example November 1938 was selected for coverage of and responses to *Kristallnacht*. Additionally, for every year of the 1930s, at least three months'

editions of one of the papers has been read, and if anything significant related to the themes of antisemitism, refugees, the left, foreign affairs, culture, and mainstream responses to the BUF was noted the other papers have also been checked for their coverage of the same issue or event. Most of the mainstream newspapers consulted were on microfilm held at the British Library Newspaper Collection, Colindale, and at Manchester Central Library. The following digital archives have also been employed: *Times* Digital Archive, 1785-1985, the *Daily Mirror* Digital Archive, and the Historical *Guardian* Digital Archive.⁶³

In many cases the reports and editorials referred to in this study do not have a by-line, and due to the constraints of time and space the individual chapters will generally concentrate on giving a reflection of the voice of the paper concerned rather than that of its individual contributors. However, there are some significant instances, where the views being expressed are clearly stated as being those of an individual, rather than the paper, or where they depart noticeably from the paper's usual stance, that warrant a little more attention.

CONTEXT AND THEMES

This thesis explores the extent to which the discourse of the British fascist press during the inter-war period promoted attitudes and opinions that were shared by the mainstream press. The historiography relating to inter-war Britain is extensive and has been hotly debated, but a brief summary will provide the necessary context for the following chapters.

Mainstream politics

The 1920s and 1930s in Britain have been described in terms of disappointed hope and the failure to grasp opportunities, and also as a time of improvement that saw the establishment of an infrastructure that would underpin later prosperity.⁶⁴ The principal themes of British politics at this time reflect both failure and limited success. There were no radical developments in the political mainstream, and, despite the election of two Labour governments, the underlying consistency of the various inter-war governments is of particular significance. Charles Loch Mowat, describing the result of the December 1918 election, refers to the beginning of 'twenty years of undistinguished Tory rule.'⁶⁵

A review of the historiography of British inter-war politics reveals a consensus of historical opinion that supports Mowat's view that Conservative thinking dominated inter-war governments. Robert Skidelsky describes the real divide in British politics in the 1920s and 1930s as being between economic radicals and economic conservatives, a divide that cut across party.⁶⁶ Martin Pugh also sees the period as characterised by Conservative primacy.⁶⁷ That nine of the eleven inter-war governments were either Conservative governments or had a majority of Conservative members supports Mowat's case, but that still leaves the two Labour governments of January to November 1924 and June 1929 to August 1931. Skidelsky argues that the 1924 government was committed to the 'Conservative case', particularly in respect of unemployment.⁶⁸ Indeed, the Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, described the Conservative leader, Stanley Baldwin, with approval, claiming that: 'In all essentials, his outlook is very similar to ours.'⁶⁹ A. J. P. Taylor described MacDonald's government as being 'in office, but not in power.' Its object was to show that Labour was capable of governing, an aim that it was only able to meet,

given the lack of previous experience of most of its ministers, by relying on the advice and expertise of civil servants.⁷⁰ MacDonald was committed to 'the inevitability of gradualness.'⁷¹ Certainly there is no evidence that the first British Labour government planned to adopt any radical socialist policies, though there were moderate achievements in housing and education.⁷² Martin Pugh agrees that the overriding concern of the Labour leadership was to demonstrate that Labour was fit for office. He suggests that a short period of government, sufficient to demonstrate to voters and the mainstream press that Labour could be trusted without having to grapple with the country's economic and social problems, was all that MacDonald wanted at that time.⁷³ MacDonald was particularly keen to convince the press, which, especially during election campaigns, often portrayed Labour politicians as akin to Bolsheviks, that the country had nothing to fear from a Labour government. The lack of an overall majority could be considered another restraining factor; without Liberal support the government could not outvote the Conservatives.

Similarly, in the 1929-1931 Labour government, Treasury views on public investment were decisive in determining policy. Taylor suggests that as this was again a minority government there was little opportunity for implementing a socialist programme. He also casts doubt on the party leadership's interest in such a programme.⁷⁴ Skidelsky takes this point further, arguing that the Government's minority status made little difference as the Labour party had developed no policies prior to the election, unlike the Liberals who had a detailed programme for public investment and consistently pressed for a bolder approach to the country's economic and social problems.⁷⁵ Pugh also rejects the lack of a parliamentary majority as significant in policy terms, describing it as an excuse for lack of action used by both Labour governments when the party leadership had no intention of moving towards

socialism. For MacDonald socialism was a long-term project unlikely to be realised in his lifetime.⁷⁶ The Labour leaders were confined by their belief that the public was not ready for socialism, and by their inability to comprehend the need to develop policies for its gradual introduction. Faced by the seemingly insurmountable economic challenges of a worldwide recession they retreated into coalition and the National Government.

Throughout this thesis economic issues are referred to, where relevant, in the individual chapters, but there is no single chapter devoted to economics. Although economic policy was central to the BUF's thinking and integral to the implementation of the proposed corporate state, the BF and IFL did not develop detailed economic policies. Leese had little understanding of economics and relied on the economic theories of his friend, the inventor, Arthur Kitson.⁷⁷ During the 1930s, despite the economic slump and high unemployment in the 'depressed areas', there was little debate in the mainstream press in relation to economics. The big economic issues of the previous two decades: tariff reform, free trade, and the gold standard were largely resolved by then, except for a period of nineteen months between 1929-31 when the *Express* and *Mail* challenged Baldwin's leadership over the issue of Empire Free Trade (EFT). Although both papers still continued to bang the drum for EFT and the imposition of tariffs between 1931-9 they were no longer arguing the case; just repeating the slogans.

Economic policy does not appear to have been an issue that captured public attention. There was some common ground between the fascists and the Empire Free Traders of the previous decade, but the majority of the mainstream expressed little interest in the issue and the exact political mix of interwar governments had minimal effect on economic policy; the Treasury kept firm control of the direction of policy.⁷⁸

During the slump of the 1930s the National Government pursued a similar economic line to that of its predecessors, rejecting the arguments of Keynes and others, for example Lloyd George and Oswald Mosley, who advocated government intervention and a more managed economy.⁷⁹ Taylor described Mosley's proposals as providing the basis for most of the constructive advances of the following thirty years.⁸⁰ The Labour leadership's rejection of the Mosley Memorandum prompted Mosley to leave the party and led to his founding of the short-lived New Party.

Nonetheless, due to the slump unemployment was a high profile issue and the BUF was keen to exploit public concern. The official unemployment figures show that more than 2,000,000 people were unemployed throughout 1931-1935; during the winter of 1932-1933 the figure rose to 3,000,000. During the 1920s there had been severe unemployment, but this was generally short term and restricted to industries with declining exports, those that had lost their markets during the First World War or were affected by the general decline in world trade. During the 1930s unemployment was more widespread and for many became a long-term prospect.⁸¹ The National Government reduced spending on public works during 1931-1932 on the grounds that relief works depleted resources needed for industrial investment. Spending on unemployment benefit was also reduced, and the long-term unemployed were subject to the means test. The Government achieved savings of £24,000,000, but the vagaries of the system caused a great deal of hardship and resentment.⁸² John Stevenson and Chris Cook argue that unemployment has been blamed for a range of social problems, for example poverty, ill health and bad housing that would have existed even if there had been high levels of employment.⁸³ They suggest that living conditions were generally improving, a view supported by Aldcroft.⁸⁴ However, Charles Webster is critical of what he describes as 'revisionism', which underplays the suffering of the

distressed areas. He emphasises the unequal provision of welfare services and points out that they were often 'least developed where most needed.'⁸⁵ The Government, influenced by the Treasury and in the absence of any effective challenge to the dominant economic orthodoxy, was convinced that little could be done to tackle unemployment and related social problems until the worldwide economic situation improved.

In the meantime most of its attention was directed towards international rather than domestic affairs. Throughout the period Britain's foreign policy was of considerable importance and during the 1930s became the dominant issue, in particular the British Government's support for the League of Nations and its attitude to Italy, the Spanish Civil War, and Germany generated much public interest.

Each of the subsequent chapters explores one or more issues related to the following themes.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism has commonly been seen as one of the most significant characteristics of British fascism and also as one of the key reasons that it remained outside of the mainstream. Yet there has been no detailed comparison of the level of antisemitic content published in the British fascist and mainstream press. Chapter one uses a three stage model based on the work of Colin Holmes and Michael Marrus to chart the extent and development of antisemitism in British fascist publications, explores the different ways in which the fascist and mainstream press portrayed Jews, and considers the relevance of developments in theoretical approaches to antisemitism. The research presented in this chapter clearly demonstrates that the antisemitic opinions of the fascist press departed substantially from the mainstream, and in the

case of those who expressed a genocidal desire for the elimination of all Jews, crossed the boundary between civilised behaviour and barbarism.

Refugees

Chapter two considers the similarities between some of the popular mainstream papers and the fascist press in writing about issues relating to refugees and discusses the more measured response of the quality press. The chapter is informed by a more detailed and extensive study of the mainstream sources than has previously been undertaken. Despite the enthusiasm of the popular press and the more cautious support of the quality press for aspects of the Nazi regime, their condemnation of the persecution of the Jews plainly separates them from the viewpoint of the fascist press on this issue. However, the attitude of the mainstream press to refugees was more complex; many of the editorial comments of the popular press could be transferred to the fascist press without appearing out of place, suggesting that British fascism was not estranged from mainstream opinion in respect of its attitudes to refugees. The reluctance of the Government and a sizeable proportion of the mainstream press to provide a refuge for those fleeing Nazi persecution is explored with reference to Tony Kushner's theories on liberal and conservative (exclusionist) antisemitism.

The Left

The attitudes of the inter-war governments to British fascism are outside the scope of this thesis and warrant a study of their own. Suffice it to say that despite the rise of fascism in Europe, the British Government and the Conservative element of the mainstream press were more concerned with the perceived threat of the radical left.⁸⁶ This was a concern that the British fascists capitalised on and one that the fascist press

constantly reinforced. Articles in the fascist press also attempted to heighten fear of the more moderate left by conflating lawful participants in the democratic process with revolutionary communism. Yet there is no evidence in the historiography to-date that shows they were successful in contributing significantly to the creation of a national climate hostile to the left. Indeed, Matthew Worley argues that the Labour party was widely perceived as occupying legitimate political space.⁸⁷ Chapter three addresses this issue and considers the extent to which the demonisation of the left was common to both the fascist and mainstream press. The analysis of the coverage of British general and municipal elections illustrates that, while the majority of the press were not generally overtly hostile to the Labour party, there were occasions when the Tory papers shared the rhetoric of the fascist press in their pillorying of the left. Comparison of coverage of the Spanish Civil War in the fascist and Tory press manifestly reinforces this point.

International relations

Chapter four will compare the response of British fascist press and the mainstream press to British foreign policy and to international events during the inter-war period. The analysis of the fascist groups will be focussed on the BUF as it offered a coherent foreign policy. There has been some detailed analysis of the BUF's foreign policy; including D. S. Lewis' claim that the foreign policy of the BUF provided a clearly defined alternative to that of the Government, but these have concentrated on the BUF in isolation and there has been no detailed comparison with the policies advocated by the mainstream press.⁸⁸ Although Webber has described the BUF's foreign policy as changeable, and in some aspects it was, in others it displayed a certain rigidity and its

fundamental principles were fixed.⁸⁹ Unlike mainstream attitudes, the BUF's policy on European affairs did not develop in response to increasing international tensions.

Culture and decadence

Much of fascist ideology is predicated on the conviction that society is decadent and moral standards are declining to such an extent that the well-being of the nation is threatened. Chapter five builds on the work of Gottlieb and Linehan *et al* in its analysis of fascist and mainstream representations of British society. The chapter is divided into three major parts. The first identifies the major cultural concerns of British fascists, the second establishes how the perceived ills were to be remedied, and the third compares the preoccupations of the fascist press with those of the national newspapers. Although cultural developments during the inter-war years did not meet with universal approval and modernism, in particular, was viewed with suspicion, fascist demands for the sweeping away of perceived expressions of decadence and degeneracy did not strike a chord with the general public. It seems that the British attitude to modernity lacked the element of destructive energy from which the Nazis were able to draw strength and popular support, and the public were receptive to a wider set of cultural mores than the fascists allowed.

Mainstream responses to the BUF

The BUF frequently claimed that they were ignored and misrepresented in the mainstream press. Chapter six tests that claim and considers the implications of the level of coverage received by the BUF in more depth than previous studies.⁹⁰ The extent to which the mainstream press situated the BUF outside the boundaries of mainstream opinion will be assessed and the response of the BBC and cinema

newsreels will be briefly considered to illustrate more fully the extent to which the BUF became estranged from the mainstream. Additionally, the chapter discusses the nature of the mainstream response in terms of anti-fascism and analyses the reaction of the BUF to what it perceived as the conspiracy against it. That reaction will be considered in the light of previous assessments, including that of Michael Spurr, that categorise the BUF as a subculture.⁹¹

Conclusion

Overall this thesis demonstrates that there were significant areas of discursive overlap between the fascist and mainstream press. Important elements of fascist thinking had mainstream roots, yet, even in areas that appear to show a convergence of views, the ideological imperative of the British fascists was not shared by the mainstream. The British fascists' vehement expressions of overt antisemitism and their refusal to tolerate any opposition or alternative viewpoint kept them on the outer margins of democratic society.

¹ For example the early contributions of Robert Benewick, *Political Violence and Public Order* (The Penguin Press, London, 1969); and Colin Cross, *The Fascists in Britain* (Barrie and Rockliff, London, 1961) highlighted the significance of political violence and the response of the social and political mainstream. More recently Anna Poole, 'Oswald Mosley And The Union Movement: Success or Failure?' in Mike Cronin (ed.), *The Failure of British Fascism* (Macmillan, London, 1996) has argued for a multi-causal approach towards the failure of British fascism, which takes into account economic conditions, cultural traditions, the nature of the British political system, the leadership and organisational skills of individual fascist movements, and the impact of the Second World War. Alternatively, Roger Griffin (ed.), *International Fascism* (Arnold, London, 1998), has suggested that for fascism to fail is the natural course of events and it was the success of the German and Italian movements that was atypical.

² See Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Modern Britain* (Sutton, Stroud, 2000); Gisela C. Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939* (Macmillan, London, 1978); Philip M. Coupland, 'The Blackshirted Utopians', *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 32, no. 2 (April, 1998), pp. 255-72; Nigel Copsey, *Anti-Fascism In Britain* (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2000); Dave Renton, *Fascism Theory And Practice* (Pluto Press, London, 1999),

³ Kenneth Lunn, 'British Fascism Revisited: A Failure of Imagination?' in Mike Cronin (ed.), pp. 166-79.

⁴ For example see Martin Durham, 'The Home And The Homeland: Gender And The British Extreme Right', *Contemporary British History* vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 67-80; 'Gender And The British Union Of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 27, no. 3 (July 1992). pp 513-529; Julie Gottlieb & Thomas Linehan (eds), *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2004); Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918-39: Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000); Dan Stone, 'The English Mistery, the BUF and the Dilemmas of British Fascism', *Journal of Modern History* vol. 75, no. 2 (June 2003), pp. 336-358.

⁵ Tony Kushner, 'The Fascist as 'Other'? Racism and Neo-Nazism in Contemporary Britain', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 28, no. 1 (1994), pp. 41-2, & 44.

⁶ Lunn, 'British Fascism Revisited', p. 170.

⁷ Todd Gray, *Blackshirts in Devon* (The Mint Press, Exeter, 2006), pp. 39, 41-2, 96, & 129. Thomas P. Linehan, *East London for Mosley: The British Union of Fascists in East London and South-West Essex 1933-40* (Frank Cass & Co, Abingdon, 1996), pp. 34-5, 114, 137-40, 161, 252, & 268-9. Nigel Todd, *In Excited Times: The People Against the Blackshirts* (Berwick Press, Whitley Bay, 1995), pp. 20-32. Todd's study of fascism and ant-fascism in the North East shows mainstream links to continental fascism but little in the way of concrete support for the BUF. David Turner, *Fascism and Anti-Fascism in the Medway Towns 1927-40* (Kent Anti-Fascism Committee, Rochester, 1993), pp. 4, 7-10.

⁸ Martin Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts! Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between the Wars* (Jonathon Cape, London, 2005), pp. 5-20.

⁹ Neil Nugent 'The Ideas of the British Union of Fascists' in Neil Nugent & Roger King (eds) *The British Right* (Saxon House, Westmead, 1977), pp. 145. G. C.

Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right 1918-1939* (Croom Helm, London, 1986), pp. 116-7, & 121.

¹⁰ Uwe Backes, *Political Extremes: A Conceptual History from Antiquity to the Present* (Routledge, London, 2010), p.177.

¹¹ Backes, p. 179.

¹² Ibid., p. 192.

¹³ Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer, 'Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory' in Wodak & Meyer (eds), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (Sage, London, 2009, 2nd edn), p. 23.

¹⁴ Robert de Beaugrande, 'Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Ideology, Methodology', *Studies in Language and Capitalism*, no. 1 (April 2007), pp. 31 & 53. Also available at <http://semiotics.nured.uowm.gr/pdfs/Beaugrande.pdf>. [21 March 2010]

¹⁵ Terry Locke, *Critical Discourse Analysis* (Continuum, London, 2004), pp. 1. John E Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2007), p. 1-2, 6, & 29-45. Wodak & Meyer, pp. 8-10.

¹⁶ Wodak & Meyer, p. 28.

¹⁷ David Riffe *et al*, *Analysing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Mahwah, 2005), pp. 4, & 173. Robert Philip Weber, *Basic Content Analysis* (Sage, London, 1990), pp. 5 & 9. See also Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology* (Sage, London, 2004, 2nd ed.).

¹⁸ Weber, pp. 16, 21-3.

¹⁹ See Roger Griffin (ed.), *International Fascism* (Arnold, London, 1998), p. 14 and Roger Eatwell, *Fascism: A History* (Pimlico, London, 2003), pp. 3-4 & 351.

²⁰ Renton rules out any attempt to understand fascism primarily as an ideology and has objected to the concentration on fascist ideology in the theories offered by Sternhell, Payne and Griffin. He argues that they neglect fascist movements and practice. Renton sees their objective approach as trying to revise the understanding of fascism in an attempt to lessen the odium attached to the Fascist and Nazi regimes. This is a gross misrepresentation of their work. See Dave Renton, *Fascism: Theory and Practice* (Pluto Press, London, 1999), p. 1; & Dave Renton, 'Fascism is more than

an Ideology', *Searchlight* (August 1999), pp. 24-5. For Griffin's response to Renton see 'Fascism is more than Reaction', *Searchlight* (September 1999), pp. 24-6.

²¹ Roger Griffin (ed.), *International Fascism*, p. 14.

²² See Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918-39: Parties, Ideologies and Culture* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000), pp. 124-49, for a detailed account of minor fascist parties in Britain between the wars.

²³ Arnold Spenser Leese, *Out Of Step: Events in the Two Lives of an Anti-Jewish Camel-Doctor* (Arnold S. Leese, Guildford, 1947), p. 49. Leese defined fascism as 'a revolt against democracy and a return to statesmanship.' See also John Morrell, 'The Life and Opinions of A. S. Leese. A study In Anti-Semitism' (MA Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1974), p. 9; Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-9* (Constable, London, 1980), p.86; & *Fascist*, Jun 1930, p. 3.

²⁴ Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 61-6.

²⁵ Griffin (ed.), *International Fascism*, pp. 14 & 102-3.

²⁶ Martin Pugh, *Hurrah*, pp.55-64, & 73.

²⁷ Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 68-9, & 71.

²⁸ Richard Griffiths, pp. 93-4. Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 67-8.

²⁹ Griffiths, pp. 92-3.

³⁰ *British Fascism*, 'Special Summer Propaganda Issue' 1933, p. 13.

³¹ Griffiths, p. 94.

³² For example see: David Baker, 'The Extreme Right in the 1920s: Fascism in a Cold Climate, Or "Conservatism with Knobs On"?' in Mike Cronin (ed.), pp. 12 & 19; Michael D. Biddis, 'Migrants, Minorities, and Mosleyites', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 4 , (1981), p. 112.

³³ Richard Thurlow, 'The Failure Of British Fascism' in A. Thorpe (ed.), *The Failure of Political Extremism in Inter-War Britain* (University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1989), p.67. Despite Thurlow's dismissal of the IFL his articles frequently either contain significant sections on Leese or refer to him. See, for example, 'The Straw that Broke the Camel's Back: Public Order, Civil Liberties and the Battle of Cable Street' in Tony Kushner & Nadia Valman (eds.), *Remembering Cable Street: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Society* (Valentine Mitchell, London, 2000), pp. 79-88; 'The "Jew-Wise": Dimensions of British Political Anti-Semitism, 1918-39', *Immigrants &*

Minorities, vol. 6 (March 1987), pp. 44-65; & 'Authoritarians and Populists on the English Far Right', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 10 (March-April 1976), pp. 13-20.

³⁴ Michael Billig, *Fascists: A Social Psychological View of the National Front* (Academic Press, London, 1978), pp. 113-4 & 119; John Morell, *The Life and Opinions of A. S. Leese* (M.A. University of Sheffield, 1975), p. 161; Neill Nugent 'Post-War Fascism' in Kenneth Lunn and Richard Thurlow (eds.), *British Fascism: Essays on the Radical Right in Inter-War Britain* (Croom Helm, London, 1980), p. 216.

³⁵ *Fascist*, Jun 1938, p. 5.

³⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/oct/23/bnp-nick-griffin-question-time>. [21 March 2010]

³⁷ Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 74-7.

³⁸ *Fascist*, Jun 1930, p. 3.

³⁹ Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, p. 41.

⁴⁰ Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, p. 62.

⁴¹ Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, pp. 64-6; Stephen Dorril, *Blackshirt* (Viking, London, 2006), pp. 244-5 & 262; Pugh, pp. 129-31.

⁴² Linehan, *British Fascism*, p. 84.

⁴³ For membership statistics see Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 151-2.

⁴⁴ Dorril, p. 371.

⁴⁵ Pugh, *Hurrah*, p. 223.

⁴⁶ Dorril, pp. 277 & 336. Pugh, p. 223.

⁴⁷ Dorril, pp. 189, 200, 315, 371, & 417. Pugh, p. 133. Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, p. 99.

⁴⁸ *Blackshirt*, 13 Mar 1937, p. 4; 10 Apr 1937, p. 4.; 31 Jul 1937, p. 4; 7 Aug 1937, p. 4; & 29 Jan 1938, p4.

⁴⁹ *Blackshirt*, Mar 1938, p. 4; Apr 1938, p. 4; May 1934, p. 4; Jul 1938, p. 4; & Aug 1938, p. 4.

⁵⁰ *Blackshirt*, Aug 1938, pp. 1 & 4. *Southern Blackshirt*, Sep 1938, p.2.

⁵¹ *Fascist Week*, 10 Nov 1933, p. 4. Dorril, p. 277.

⁵² Pugh, *Hurrah*, p. 221.

⁵³ Pugh, *Hurrah*, p. 223.

⁵⁴ *Action*, 10 Apr 1937, p. 8; 28 Jan 1938, p.8, 5 Feb 1938, p. 10; 26 Mar 1938, p. 10; & 2 Apr 1938, p. 10.

⁵⁵ *Action*, 5 Feb 1938, p. 10; 12 Feb 1938, p. 10; 6 Mar 1938, p. 10; & 26 Mar 1938, p. 10.

⁵⁶ *Action*, 2 Apr 1938, p. 10 & 8 Apr 1939, p. 10.

⁵⁷ *Action*, 15 Apr 1939, p. 10 & 23 May 1940, p. 4. The final four-page issue was published on 6 June 1940 and had no editorial credits.

⁵⁸ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004), p. 3.

⁵⁹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/gnm-archive/2002/jun/06/2>. [21 March 2010]

⁶⁰ John O. Stubbs, 'Garvin, James Louis (1868–1947)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33345>, [1 March 2010].

⁶¹ James Curran & Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility* (Fontana, Glasgow, 1981), pp. 82-4. S.J. Taylor *The Great Outsiders: Northcliffe, Rothermere and the Daily Mail* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1996), pp. 140, 227, 285, & 313-4.

⁶² Curran & Seaton, pp. 82-4. Paul W. Doerr, *British Foreign Policy 1919-1939* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998), p 151. Lord Burnham, *Peterborough Court: The Story Of the Daily Telegraph* (Cassell & Company Ltd, London, 1955), p. 178.

⁶³ *Times* Digital Archive, 1785-1985:

<http://www.gale.cengage.com/DigitalCollections/products/Times/>. [21 March 2010]

Daily Mirror Digital Archive at <http://www.arcitext.com/arcitext/index.html>. [21 March 2010]

Historical *Guardian* Digital Archive: <http://archive.guardian.co.uk>. [21 March 2010]

⁶⁴ See the epilogue in Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: The Economic History of Britain 1700-1914* (Methuen, London, 1983, 2nd ed.); Charles Loch Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940* (Methuen & Co, London, 1955), pp. 356-65; part four of Martin Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1982); and Robert Skidelsky, *Politicians and the Slump: the Labour Government of 1929-1931* (Macmillan, London, 1967).

⁶⁵ Mowat, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Robert Skidelsky, *Politicians and the Slump*, p. xi.

-
- ⁶⁷ Martin Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics*, p. 241.
- ⁶⁸ Skidelsky, p. 38.
- ⁶⁹ Cited in A. J. P. Taylor, *England 1914-1945* (The Folio Society, London, 2000), p. 179.
- ⁷⁰ Taylor, *England*, p. 183.
- ⁷¹ Robert Graves & Alan Hodge, *The Long Week-end* (Hutchinson, London, 1940), p. 153.
- ⁷² See Taylor, *England*, p. 183-4.
- ⁷³ Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics*, p. 236. Graves & Hodge, p. 246.
- ⁷⁴ Taylor, *England*, p. 237.
- ⁷⁵ Skidelsky, pp. xxi & 338
- ⁷⁶ Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics*, p. 269.
- ⁷⁷ For an example of Kitson's economic theories see, Arthur Kitson, 'What Will He Do With It', *The National Review*, (December 1924), pp. 535-54.
- ⁷⁸ Derek H. Aldcroft, *The British Economy Volume 1: The Years of Turmoil 1920-1951* (Wheatsheaf, Brighton, 1986), pp. 1-6.
- ⁷⁹ Aldcroft, pp. 100-6. Mathias, pp. 409-10. Mosley resigned, firstly from the government and then from the Labour party, over this issue and went on to form the short-lived New Party. Following the electoral failure of the New Party he founded the British Union of Fascists.
- ⁸⁰ Taylor, *England*, p. 248.
- ⁸¹ John Stevenson & Chris Cook, *Britain in the Depression: Society and Politics 1929-39* (Longman, Harlow, 1994), pp. 65-70.
- ⁸² Stevenson & Cook, pp. 75-82.
- ⁸³ Stevenson & Cook, p. 108.
- ⁸⁴ Stevenson & Cook, pp. 11-13 & 15-32; and Aldcroft, p. 116. See also Mowat, p. 463.
- ⁸⁵ Charles Webster, 'Health, Welfare and Unemployment During the Depression' in *Past and Present* Vol. 109 (1985), pp. 204-230.
- ⁸⁶ Todd, p. 3.
- ⁸⁷ Matthew Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2005), pp. 8, 20, 38-9.

⁸⁸ D. S. Lewis, *Illusions of Grandeur* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1987), p. 182.

⁸⁹ Webber, pp. 121-2.

⁹⁰ Jon Lawrence, 'Fascist Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Inter-War Britain: The Olympia Debate Revisited', *Historical Research*, vol. 76, no. 192 (May 2003), pp. 232-267; 'Why Olympia Mattered', *Historical Research*, vol. 78, no. 200 (May 2005), pp. 263-72. Martin Pugh, 'The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', *The Historical Journal*, vol. xli (1998), pp. 592-42; 'The National Government, the British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', *Historical Research*, vol. 78, no. 200 (May 2005), pp. 253-62.

⁹¹ Michael Spurr, "'Living the Blackshirt Life': Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940", *Contemporary European History*, vol. 12, no. 3, (2003), p. 321.

BEYOND THE PALE? – Attitudes towards domestic antisemitism¹

While fascism ineluctably tends towards racism in its attempts to generate a sense of unique national identity and destiny, it is not necessarily antisemitic. Roger Griffin argues that the myth of a pure race is not essential to fascism, nor is it necessary for the nation to be conceptualised in biological terms.² Yet, antisemitism offers fascists a convenient scapegoat to blame for all the nation's perceived ills, and allows them to tap into pre-existing antipathy to Jews, providing a focus for their drive to cleanse and renew the nation.

Inter-war fascism in Britain is indelibly associated with antisemitism, but not uniquely so. Certainly, there is a long history of hostility to Jews in England. There were anti-Jewish riots in York in 1190, and in 1290 Edward I exploited anti-Jewish sentiment when he expelled all Jews from England to avoid repaying the money he had borrowed to finance wars with Wales and Scotland.³ Although this order was never formally rescinded Cromwell allowed professing Jews to establish communities in England from 1656 onwards.⁴ As discussed below, the term 'antisemitism' was coined in the nineteenth century and distinguishes a more secular hatred of Jews rather than the traditional religious antipathy.⁵ Since Disraeli's premiership this type of 'modern' antisemitism had been a feature of British society, though, patently, not to the same extent as in mainland Europe.⁶ British antisemitism tended to be economic and social rather than political and this has been posited as one reason for fascism's failure in this country.⁷ Indeed, Britain is often portrayed as a country that has been relatively free of prejudice towards Jews, for example William D. Rubinstein

described inter-war Britain as almost entirely free from racial-national antisemitism.⁸ Nonetheless, the historiography of the last few decades has demonstrated that antisemitism, in various forms, has been a menacing and persistent presence in Britain, and Tony Kushner argues that non-organised forms of antisemitism did have a strong negative effect on British Jews.⁹

The virulence of antisemitism in Britain was not a constant factor and Colin Holmes has shown that, although there was no evidence of government sanctioned antisemitism, the period immediately after the First World War was one in which prejudice against Jews was increasing. Holmes links the increase to the British publication of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and the appointment of several Jews to prominent government positions.¹⁰ His analysis of antisemitism in British society shows that antisemitism was prevalent among individuals and certain groups during the inter-war period, but he acknowledges that without a reliable means of surveying public opinion it is impossible to be precise about the extent.¹¹ Significantly, however, Holmes does not examine the role of the mainstream press, which, then as now, attempted to fulfil a dual role endeavouring to both shape public opinion and to reflect it. Moreover, more recent work by William I. Brustein on articles relating to Jews sampled from the *Daily Mail* does not analyse the articles in any depth, classifying them simply as favourable, unfavourable, and neutral. His conclusion suggests that the paper was not overtly antisemitic, but does not greatly advance our understanding.¹²

By comparing the antisemitic content of the mainstream and fascist press and concentrating on the period 1925-1936, before the increasing refugee crisis altered the dynamics of the debate between liberal and fascist viewpoints, this chapter seeks to determine whether the antisemitism of the British fascist press represented a reflection

or an extension of mainstream views or whether it goes far beyond mainstream concerns and was, in fact, beyond the pale.

DEFINING ANTISEMITISM

There is no universally accepted definition of antisemitism and while there is much common ground each attempt at definition adds a new twist, stressing the relative importance of different characteristics. There is agreement among academics that antisemitism is a relatively modern term, first used in Germany in 1879.¹³ Gisela Lebzelter distinguishes between antisemitism and the hostility that host communities throughout the ages have felt towards unassimilated groups whose social and religious practices were distinct from their own.¹⁴ Both Lebzelter and Richard S. Levy have ascribed the development of antisemitism, as distinct from the traditional hostility to Jews, to the emancipation of Jews across Europe that began in the late 1860s.¹⁵ However, they disagree on the nature of the change. For Lebzelter the definition of antisemitism is based on ideas and perceptions, the distinguishing feature of antisemitism being that it does not allow for assimilation or conversion to Christianity, as any form of integration would be seen as corrupting the host community. In this definition antisemitism denies that Jews are part of the nation, considers them inferior and evil, and seeks to exclude them from the community.¹⁶ Conversely, Levy sees the difference between antisemitism and anti-Jewish feeling as being located not merely in ideas and emotions but in continuing action. Those who continually act against Jews are antisemites even if they believe conversion is a possibility.¹⁷ There are problems with both of these definitions as they lack the flexibility to distinguish and measure the levels of antisemitism being expressed in the

fascist and mainstream press, and, therefore, are of little use in evaluating any differences between the two.

More recently Brustein, has identified thirteen categories of action, ranging from false accusations against Jews to murderous riots that can be classified as antisemitic. However, he accepts that his typology does not acknowledge the variable significance of different acts within a category. For example his category on the formation of antisemitic groups would not distinguish between the British fascist groups in relation to the extent of their antisemitism.¹⁸

Of more practical use in assessing antisemitism in Britain are the definitions deployed by Colin Holmes and Michael Marrus. Both categorise antisemitism in terms of degree, and include less virulent forms than is possible under Lebzelter's definition, which would exclude antisemites such as G. K. Chesterton who believed, in principle, that Jews could be assimilated if they became Christians.¹⁹ Holmes offers a clear definition that also has the advantage of being easy to apply. Having stipulated that antisemitism exists only insofar as it is directed at Jews as Jews, rather than at individuals or groups who happen to be or include Jews, he identifies three types of antisemitism. The first is directed at prominent individuals or groups, for example a Jewish member of the government or Jewish financiers who are criticised or abused because they are assumed to have characteristics stereotypically ascribed to Jews. The second is directed at all Jews, who are perceived in a stereotypical fashion. These views can be described as racist, but not in biological terms. Finally, the third sees all Jews as biologically undesirable aliens whose blood corrupts the nation.²⁰

Similarly, Marrus' model distinguishes three categories of antisemitism, which he pictures as three concentric circles.²¹ The concept of concentric circles is also endorsed by Albert S. Lindemann, who, while acknowledging its limitations, in

particular the difficulty in fixing boundaries as some antisemites appear to belong in different categories at different times, argues that it offers a systematic and coherent way of dealing with different degrees of antisemitism.²² Marrus' outer circle encompasses a wide body of anti-Jewish feeling ranging from vague antipathy to conscious decisions not to associate socially with Jews. Lindemann describes the antisemitism of this outer circle as mild and unreflective expressions of repugnance for Jews that usually reflect the antisemites' cultural background. If 'first-circle' antisemites move away from that culture, either physically or intellectually, they are capable of forming normal relationships with Jews. The feelings and responses of antisemites in the second band of Marrus' model are more intense and volatile. They have a hostile and defensive attitude towards Jews, becoming more active and more numerous at times of perceived national crisis. Lindemann suggests that the second circle is comprised of those who find some intellectual and psychological satisfaction in antisemitism and are, therefore, more consistently committed to its expression. They are more likely to join antisemitic organisations and, while not supporting radical solutions to what they see as the 'Jewish problem,' they promote exclusionist policies in the belief that Jews should be subject to restrictions and controls, some going so far as to advocate separate existence, a view not restricted to gentiles. Fanatical antisemites, who have an irrational reaction to Jews that is not influenced by events or actual Jewish actions, make up the inner core of the model. They see Jews as a powerful and all-pervading force that threatens the survival of civilisation as they know it. These fears tend to be expressed in racial terms; Jewishness is portrayed as an indelible taint, a disease that corrupts and destroys the nation. The final or inner circle, then, is the preserve of those who would deny Jews their humanity and any right to fair and equal treatment. These eliminationist antisemites advocate the

removal of Jews from the community and the most extreme contemplate the destruction of the Jews with equanimity, as they can tolerate no compromise with what they perceive as evil incarnate.

For our purposes the concept of measuring antisemitism by degrees provides a useful tool for comparing the publications of the various fascist organisations with each other and with the mainstream press. It also provides a means of noting the progression of some fascist publications from vague cultural antisemitism to racist and biological antisemitism.

ANTISEMITISM AND THE BRITISH FASCISTS

A definition that recognises different forms of antisemitism is particularly useful in considering the position of the British Fascists (BF) as their attitude to Jews has been subject to considerable debate. Richard Thurlow claims that the BF did not become hostile to Jews until 1932, while Thomas Linehan notes that antisemitism did not become official policy until 1933, although 'a vague form of "anti-alienism" featured in BF pronouncements' which Linehan considers might have been used as a code by some members.²³ Kenneth Lunn, however, argues that that this assessment of the BF's antisemitism underestimates the extent to which antisemitism was part of the BF's political message.²⁴ While there were 'coded' references to Jews, particularly in relation to their alleged control of the press, with references to 'The Hidden Hand in Fleet Street'²⁵, 'Financiers' and 'lords of usury'²⁶, there were also more explicit allusions to Jews, including references to the 'Jewish Question' and the alleged aim of 'crushing Christian civilisation,' which would support Lunn's interpretation,²⁷ as would the 'Principles of Fascism' set out in *British Lion*, which listed restrictions on the civil rights of, and extra taxes to be levied on, 'aliens' who were 'not of British

parentage and descent.' A note makes it clear that 'Jews are in all cases mentioned, regarded as aliens.'²⁸ Certainly, there were antisemites in the organisation and their views were reflected in the articles and letters printed in the BF press. The antisemitic tendency of the BF was reinforced by the use of material previously published in the *Patriot*, a journal funded by the eighth Duke of Northumberland to promote antisemitic and 'Die-hard' Conservative views.²⁹

In the mid 1920s the BF's primary concern was the threat of communist revolution, and the *Fascist Bulletin* was largely comprised of articles and reports of meetings exposing the communist menace and the need for the BF to organise a force to overcome it. Nonetheless, within these articles and reports there were frequent references to the undesirable influence of Jews. The first issue of the weekly edition of the *Fascist Bulletin* reported meetings at which speakers had explained that the Bolshevik Revolution was the work of German Jews or international Jews bent on world domination. Brigadier General Blakeney in his front-page editorial also referred to unrest in Russia due to 'the tyranny of alien Communists.'³⁰ Similar items appeared weekly, including allegations of atrocities committed in Russia by troops 'almost entirely composed of alien races, led by Jewish Commissars,' and repeated claims that the Russian government was led by German Jews or by a 'Junta of Jews.'³¹ The BF also turned their attention to British Jews in the 1920s.

Examples of antisemitism employing the application of racial stereotypes to all Jews were also common, although sometimes the message appeared confused as to the nature of the threat they represented. An article in the *Fascist Bulletin* claimed Jewish immigrants were 'largely from the lowest grades of their nations of origin, and have been largely responsible for the contamination of our British stocks, the multiplication of the unfit, and the slums of our industrial cities.' However, a couple

of paragraphs later the threat presented by Jewish immigrants was perceived in a very different manner:

many of them, of course, as everyone recognises, men of high intelligence and capacity - their influence now permeates every sphere of national and international life, including Bolshevism and Communism. It is quite obvious that the Jews will continue their control in England's affairs until present Englishmen show sufficient virility and will to sweep them out of their country, or until their investments in the cinema trade or other undertakings for the advancement and comfort of our great democracy have ceased to be sufficiently lucrative to accord with Jewish ideals, when they will decamp to invest under other flags and climes.³²

There is no indication in the article that the author was aware of any contradiction in his use of such very different stereotypes. His perception of Jews as an inferior and corrupting influence is resolutely fixed and so the recognition that Jews may be 'men of high intelligence' is tempered by the belief that they do not produce anything - all their endeavours are perceived as parasitic and exploitative. The intertwined themes of international chicanery and parasitic exploitation were a frequent refrain throughout the British fascist press, though this was not unique among antisemites and the perception of Aryans as being a 'creative' race, with Jews cast as exploitative despoilers, was integral to Nazi antisemitism, in particular.

In addition, there were regular references linking Jews to 'International Finance,' an amorphous group depicted as intent on furthering their own interests to the detriment of the British nation.³³ Significantly, the BF did not hesitate to promote Jewish conspiracy theories. In 1925 an article in the *Fascist Bulletin* referred readers to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, long after the *Times* had proved it to be a forgery. In the same issue there was also a letter arguing that the *Protocols* had not been forged.³⁴ A slight change of tactics was adopted in 1926, the provenance of the protocols was brushed aside and it was asserted that 'Whatever the origin of the Book of Protocols, there is much that is undeniably true in its pages ...'³⁵ However, no

doubts about their authenticity were expressed in *British Lion* when Colonel A. H. Lane referred to the *Protocols* as part of a protest against the employment of naturalised British subjects as teachers in London schools.³⁶ Henry Ford's 'Jewish Conspiracy' theories were also promoted, and in 1931 it was alleged that Ford had retracted these views only after an attempt was made on his life and the application of intense psychological pressure, both allegedly orchestrated by Jews.³⁷

The contamination of the 'race' and the need for Britons to be 'pure-bred' was another issue concerning the BF in the 1920s and Blakeney issued instructions that 'Only young and able-bodied men of pure British race are to be accepted for "Q" Divisions.'³⁸ During 1925, in response to increasing concern among the BF leadership that revolution or civil war was imminent, all of the BF's county-based commands were ordered to set up small infantry units which, when the anticipated emergency arose, would be merged into "Q" Divisions intended to support the 'Authorities', act as a loyalist rallying point and engage the communist insurgents on the streets.³⁹ How effective the "Q" Divisions would have been is a matter of speculation, but it seems unlikely that the BF had sufficient young and active members to mount an effectual defence of the nation against the envisaged revolutionaries. Blakeney himself appeared to acknowledge that the "Q" Divisions were not at full strength when he wrote: '[w]hen the rush of recruits comes it will be necessary to show great discrimination in their selection.'⁴⁰ Those existing members who did not meet Blakeney's standards or who caused 'mutual distrust and friction' were to be identified by regional Commanders and 'got rid of or put into such positions that they cannot do harm.'⁴¹

The BF's fears regarding the dangers posed by immigration were expressed in more detail in an article by 'Pro Patria,' in which Englishmen were alleged to be

surrounded by ‘foreign and hybrid elements’ described as ‘paper Britishers.’ It was alleged that allowing immigrants to become ‘naturalised’ weakened the nation because the naturalisation certificate ‘cannot change the race (with its implications) of the recipient.’ The article claimed that immigrants from the East, near East, Balkans and Southern Europe ‘come provided with their own race memories which are not ours, with race instincts which are not ours, and with mental and moral points of view, the result of their racial heritage, which are not “assimilable” to our British standards of life and character.’⁴² The future of the race was said to depend on preventing aliens from stealing the birthright of Englishmen.

The foregrounding of race in this article and the rejection of the possibility of assimilation suggest that the author has come close to the boundary between the second and third categories of antisemitism. However, the examples of the threat presented by alien immigration are not expressed in the terms used by the most extreme racial and biological antisemites; there is no mention of purity of the blood, and aliens are not depicted as a disease contaminating the national body. Instead the author relies on the more typical antisemitic complaints of the BF leadership and members, issues that were frequently raised in the *Fascist Bulletin*, the alleged alien control of the banking system and alien responsibility for the Gold Standard. No measures are suggested to restrict alleged alien influence and protect the nation, reflecting the BF’s lack of a clear policy on this issue prior to the publishing of the 1928 principles.

Following the adoption of a more overtly fascist ideology in 1932, the BF continued to embrace antisemitism, giving it a higher public profile in 1933 in an attempt to show that there were sound reasons for their antisemitism and to refute suggestions that they hated Jews unreasonably or wanted to ‘ape Germany’s lead.’⁴³

The defence of their antisemitic policy was that as 'Nationalists and Imperialists' they put their own people first and had to 'deal with any non-racial element which has been allowed to assume a controlling power in our midst.'⁴⁴ Britain had to be run by Britons, who must have preference above aliens. Jews had no right to British citizenship because they retained 'their racial allegiances and customs.'⁴⁵ It was also alleged that the Jewish community had a higher proportion of criminals than the general population.⁴⁶ A frequent complaint in the BF press was that Jews attempted to gain political and economic supremacy wherever they settled, and that in Britain they controlled the National Government and were attempting to destroy the Conservative party.⁴⁷

However, the BF explicitly rejected more radical solutions for removing Jewish influence stating that they had no plan to 'quietly assassinate all Jews resident in this land.' They intended to 'merely label him as an alien, and thus have a right to control his actions while he is resident in our midst.' If Jews conducted themselves as 'honest and law-abiding citizen[s],' even though the BF refused to recognise them as citizens, they would 'have no need to squeal at the treatment meted out' by the BF.⁴⁸

For some members the BF's policy was not sufficiently antisemitic or fascistic and they left to join more militant organisations. This had been a fairly regular occurrence throughout the BF's existence. The first significant loss was in 1925 when around a hundred members set up the National Fascisti, a more extreme group that collapsed three years later due to factional struggles and a lack of funds. Following internal disputes over the role of the BF during the 1926 General Strike several prominent members, including Blakeney, A. E. Armstrong, and the Earl of Glasgow, left to form a rival organisation known as the British Loyalists. Shortly after this Arnold Leese, who had been one of two BF candidates elected as local councillors in

Stamford in Lincolnshire, also resigned. In 1928 Leese was one of the founder members of the Imperial Fascist League. Blakeney also joined the IFL, becoming one of its most prominent members. Towards the end of 1931 and the beginning of 1932 Neil Francis Hawkins and E. G. Mandeville Roe led the defection to the BUF of those members of the BF who supported a merger with Mosley's New Party hoping to find the policies and leadership the BF lacked.⁴⁹

The BF had not developed a consistent racial policy and though the 1930s saw them move more deeply in to the second category of antisemitism they did not progress beyond it into the third, although some former members, including Arnold Leese and William Joyce, would go on to do so. Apart from the example by 'Pro Patria' mentioned above the BF did not specifically rule out assimilation, but articles in *British Fascism* appear to envisage a society where Jews would live on the margins and would be deported if they transgressed. Where they would be deported to was not specified and the question of inter-marriage was not addressed. The BF's antisemitism was not radicalised by the success of the NSDAP in Germany.

THE IMPERIAL FASCIST LEAGUE

In sharp contrast to the BF, the IFL did develop a detailed racial policy. As editor of the *Fascist* Arnold Leese used the paper to express his increasingly obsessive antisemitism. J. E. Morell has suggested that the IFL's primary concern was antisemitism, fascism being merely a convenient cloak.⁵⁰ Richard Griffiths appears to share this view claiming the IFL 'took a violently antisemitic line' from the beginning.⁵¹ Colin Cross also asserts that from the first Leese saw himself as a racial fascist.⁵² He suggests that the *Fascist* was based on *Der Stürmer*, and maintains that Leese frequently quoted from it and made similar use of cartoons.⁵³ However, *Der*

Stürmer is not mentioned in the *Fascist* prior to 1932, though the *Völkischer Beobachter* is, and cartoons were not a regular feature of the *Fascist* until the end of 1933.⁵⁴ Lebzelter has paid closer attention to the primary sources and notes that there is no evidence of racial antisemitism at the time the IFL was founded. She identifies a change of attitude in 1930, related to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; which later developed into racial antisemitism.⁵⁵ Holmes' interpretation broadly supports this view. He argues that 'after 1930 racial ideas and philosophies were central and paramount.'⁵⁶ It is not surprising that interpretations vary as the views expressed in the *Fascist* during its first year are not clear-cut, reflecting the lack of a fully developed antisemitic policy and also representing the differing views of individual contributors. Significantly, when Arnold Leese became the leader of the IFL and editor of the *Fascist* his views dominated IFL policy and propaganda, and a more consistent antisemitic tone developed. This was largely due to the lack of members willing or able to contribute to the paper and very soon most of the *Fascist* was written by Leese. As his obsession with Jewish conspiracy theories grew so did the degree and extent of the *Fascist's* antisemitic content.

The first edition of the *Fascist*, published in March 1929, made no mention of Jews at all, nor did the *Fascist Principles* of the IFL published in May 1931, although that issue did state that Britain could not absorb the alien Jewish population without deteriorating.⁵⁷ Lebzelter notes that initially Jews were not explicitly denied membership of the IFL.⁵⁸ However, during 1929 to the end of 1930 there were an increasing number of articles critical of Jews. There were three main reasons for these articles: firstly Zionism, Leese was incensed by those Jews who put Zionist interests before the interests of Britain.⁵⁹ Secondly, he was suspicious of Jewish financiers and believed that 'Jewish Money Power' was linked to the League of

Nations and was responsible for the Gold Standard, both of which he fiercely opposed.⁶⁰ Thirdly, influenced by his experience as a veterinary surgeon, he strenuously disapproved of *shechita*, the Jewish method of ritual slaughter for cattle, which he believed caused the animals unnecessary suffering. This was an issue he continued to publicise for the rest of his life.⁶¹

Fears of a Jewish conspiracy were added to the mix from the beginning of 1930, with the appearance of frequent items on Jewish domination of British and international affairs.⁶² The *Fascist* alleged that Jewish finance was influencing the British government, Bolshevism was a Jewish plot, and none of this was made public because Jews controlled the press.⁶³ The existence of the supposed Jewish conspiracy was demonstrated by quoting from the *Protocols*.⁶⁴

However, although there is evidence of increasing antisemitism, there was little that was expressly racially antisemitic. 'Racial security' was mentioned in July 1929, but Jews were not specifically mentioned as a threat. A process of assimilation was proposed whereby alien British subjects could become citizens over the course of three generations; Jews were not explicitly excluded from this.⁶⁵ Indeed, in October 1929 Leese stated that 'the Jewishness of the Jew begins to fade when he mixes with Gentiles!' He claimed that the Jewish authorities had invented Zionism to circumvent assimilation.⁶⁶ But, by September 1931, the *Fascist's* line had hardened to "'No Jews" is better than "Good Jews"'.⁶⁷

The beginnings of racial antisemitism can be traced back to September 1930 when Leese recommends Hans F. K. Günther's *The Racial Elements of European History* to his readers.⁶⁸ Leese described Günther as 'a well known Nazi' and his book as 'a sure guide to the principles of Nordic politics.'⁶⁹ Günther's racial theories appealed to Leese's existing prejudices, and he relied heavily on them in the

development of his racial antisemitism. The following month, in an article praising the NSDAP's electoral success, Leese asserts that the Nordic races:

Are facing a common enemy in the Jew Money Power and so their Fascism will be always anti-Jewish from racial reasons quite unconnected with religion.⁷⁰

Around this time Leese also began to consider how the nation could be protected from the perceived threat of Jewish control and in December 1930 the *Fascist* proposed that aliens 'be displaced from key positions in any essential industry ... our definition of aliens includes all Jews.'⁷¹ At this stage, however, expressions of racial antisemitism were rare.

In March 1931, Leese's antisemitic writings took on a more noxious tone. In considering what he regarded as the 'only three possible ways in which the Jew menace can end' he stated that 'the first is in their extermination,' an option he did not expressly reject, as he did that of assimilation, 'which no decent Nordic man or woman could consider seriously.'⁷² If compulsory segregation was to be the agreed solution, Leese favoured the Madagascar scheme advocated by Henry Beamish challenging doubters to 'show us "a better 'ole" in which to dump this Nation which invariably abuses the hospitality of every other people among which it is given shelter.'⁷³

This month also saw the first appearance of 'News from the Jewish Front,' a regular column featuring a selection of items relating to Jews, alleged Jews, or those associated with Jews. Some of these items were merely snide pieces of gossip, others were loosely connected to current affairs, but the majority merely report the appointment of Jews to responsible positions, or question the ancestry of public figures to whom Leese had taken a dislike.⁷⁴ Although the content of this column is little more than antisemitic tittle-tattle it is not insignificant, as it constantly reinforced

negative images of Jews in the minds of its readers and helped to create the perception of a relentless encroachment of Jewish influence.

In June, July and August of 1931 Leese quoted extensively from the *Protocols*, and outlined the alleged plan for Jewish world domination, but said little about race, except that 'Race is the Basis of all Statesmanship.'⁷⁵ Yet, it is a significant sign of the increasingly explicit and overt nature of the IFL's antisemitism that, by November 1931, the summary of IFL policy had been altered to mention Jews specifically. Instead of being opposed to 'Alien Domination, through the Gold Standard' the IFL now favoured the 'Elimination of evil alien influences, especially that of the Jews.'⁷⁶ The significance of race was also highlighted in an article by a German 'National Socialist' in January 1932, but there is no comment on the subject from Leese.⁷⁷ However, it is from this point that the IFL moves inexorably towards the third category of antisemitism and the advocacy of biological-eliminationist, antisemitism.

The increasing significance of racial fascism within the IFL was marked in January 1933 when the swastika replaced the fasces on the masthead of the *Fascist*. From March 1934 the *Fascist* described itself as the 'organ of racial fascism.' Although Lebzelter is correct to point out the 'increasing rabidness' of Leese's antisemitic propaganda during this period, she is mistaken when she claims that the IFL's aim was 'the same as of whole-sale massacre.'⁷⁸ It appears that she has misread the source. When taken in context that phrase refers to the fate of the Nordic race if no action was taken against the Jews.⁷⁹

The *Fascist* continued to demand that Jews be eliminated from Britain; asserting that there was only one final and permanent solution that could prevent total ruin 'so far as the British empire is concerned; and that is ALL JEWS OUT.'⁸⁰ Leese and the

IFL advocated the complete removal of all Jews from British territory because, like the NSDAP, they had come to believe that:

Race underlies the whole organised life of mankind, and that only on the basis of sound racial ideals can the structure of a national civilisation be built.⁸¹

Articles in *The Fascist* frequently included phrase such as 'Race is the basis of politics.'⁸² For the IFL race was not synonymous with nationality, rather each country was characterised by the different proportions of racial types within its boundaries. According to Leese, again relying on Günther, the Jews were not a race, as such, but a combination of inferior races alien to Europe. He believed it was the predominance of the Hither Asiatic blood in this racial mix that explained the Jews' alleged cruelty, sadism, and lust for revenge. He included stereotypical descriptions of the appearance and character traits of Hither Asiatics:

In temperament the Hither Asiatic is mean and sensual... Deliberate cruelty comes very easily to him; revenge is one of his strong passions, (The Jewish Purim is a festival of revenge), and homosexuality is another... for all his cunning, the Jew has never been able to form a lasting State.⁸³

Such stereotypical representations of Jews featured regularly in the front-page cartoons of the *Fascist*. There were also frequent comments to the effect that Jews were incapable of original thought or creativity.⁸⁴

Additionally, Leese used allegations of ritual murder as an anti-Jewish propaganda tool, linking it to the kidnapping of the Lindberg baby.⁸⁵ In 1934 he also expressed his approval of Julius Streicher's allegations of ritual murder in *Der Stürmer*. Referring to the nature of the illustrations used by Streicher, Leese excused them on the grounds that:

it is often necessary to be startling and crude before one can wake up the gentle-minded Gentile to a realisation of the abominations of Jewry.⁸⁶

The influence of *Der Stürmer* can be seen in an article in which Leese claimed that the cruel nature of the Jews was demonstrated by the ritual murders alleged to take place at Passover and Purim, and the ritual slaughter of animals for food. 'The love of torture, or sadism, seems an instinct with all these people, an instinct which, it seems, *must be satisfied*.'⁸⁷ He maintained that:

It is well established, in spite of many shameless denials, that Jews practise ritual murder of Christians in order to obtain fresh blood to mix in their ceremonial Passover bread.⁸⁸

In July 1936 Leese repeated allegations of ritual murder and it was this article that led to his trial for seditious libel.⁸⁹ These alleged practices of the Jews are typical of accusations made against 'out-groups' throughout history. Similar charges of murder, cannibalism, and sexual deviance were made, for example, during the persecution of the Christians by the Roman Empire, the persecution of heretics by the Christian church, and the persecution of witches in early modern Europe.⁹⁰

Leese was convinced that a significant part of the 'Jewish conspiracy' was a strategy of weakening the Nordic race by marrying into Nordic families, or by seducing its women, married or single. He believed that the greatest crime any Nordic could commit was to fail their race by inter-marriage. The *Fascist* adopted a 'name and shame' policy, publicising the names of those believed to have married Jews; particularly the aristocracy who were thought to have a special duty to protect the Empire and the race.⁹¹ Leese relied on the research of Gregor Mendel (1822-1884), an Austrian priest and botanist who developed the theory of heredity based on his experiments with pea plants: 'Mendel has shown that a Race is never lost through mixture, *provided there is a desire to regain it*.'⁹² The Nordic blood could be recovered if Mendelian principles were observed.⁹³ Leese, taking a similar approach to Günther, believed that when two races interbred the original prototypes were not

lost, one would predominate and if those with predominantly Nordic characteristics bred only with other Nordics then any inferior blood would be, eventually, bred out.

However, further contamination had to be prevented and *The Fascist* continued to advocate segregation as the most appropriate policy. In 1935, Leese considered that the use of the lethal chamber to solve the 'Jewish Menace' was:

quite practicable but (some would say unfortunately) in our time it is unlikely that the world will demand the adoption of that drastic procedure.⁹⁴

Therefore, Madagascar remained the IFL's preferred solution. Leese argued that all the world's Jews should be deported to Madagascar, at their own expense. The island would be partitioned and the Jews would have to pay compensation to the French government and to the indigenous population, who would have a portion of the island for their own exclusive use. The area around Madagascar would be policed by air and naval patrols provided by the Nordic nations, but paid for by the Jews. Once the deportations were complete any Jew discovered anywhere in the world except Madagascar would be liable to the death penalty.⁹⁵

The only difficulty with the Madagascar scheme that Leese acknowledged was in deciding exactly who was a Jew, and therefore to be exiled, when there had been so much mixing of blood. The problem of definition was also of concern to the Nazi government and on 14 November 1935 the First Supplementary Decree of the Reich Citizenship Law was issued. A Jew was defined as someone with more than two non-Aryan grandparents. People with one or two Jewish grandparents were classified as of mixed blood, that is *Mischlinge*. A *Mischling* of the first degree had two Jewish grandparents and a *Mischling* of the second degree had only one. *Mischlinge* retained their citizenship rights. The decision as to the Jewishness of a grandparent depended on whether or not they had been a member of the Jewish religious community.⁹⁶

Leese welcomed the developments in Germany, though he saw them as only a beginning. Leese did not dispute the German definition of a pure Aryan as one who was 'wholly, or seven-eighths non-Jewish,' but his own approach to the classification of Jews was harsher than that of the First Supplementary Decree. Before the proclamation of the Nuremberg Laws he had already made his position clear:

There can be no exception in this expulsion of the Jews. ... Half-caste Jews and quarter Jews constitute a difficult problem, as do half-castes all over the world; we do not think there is any solution to that problem other than sending them away with their Jewish blood-brothers, although they should receive special assistance. Milder dilutions of Jewish blood can probably be absorbed into our population, but cannot receive full citizenship nor can such be allowed to hold titles or official posts.⁹⁷

Leese regarded someone with only an eighth of Jewish blood, who the Nazi regime would class as pure Aryan, as unfit for citizenship or public service. Half and quarter Jews, who retained their citizenship in Nazi Germany, were to be exiled to Madagascar. Though he did not explicitly forbid marriages between Nordics and other European races it seems implicit in his references to Mendel's principles and the need to recover Nordic blood by breeding true to type.

The output of the *Fascist* included every type of antisemitism from attacks on individual Jews, through stereotypical portrayals of Jews as a group, to consideration of genocide on biological grounds. Leese presented his readers with a racial philosophy that conformed to his Manichean view of the world. By the late 1930s there was hardly an item in the *Fascist* that was not linked in some way to Jews. Using the three categories of antisemitism it is clear how quickly Leese and the IFL moved from the outer edges of the model to its inner core. The transition from the first category to the second was a matter of months. Within eighteen months biological racial antisemitism had been adopted and by the second anniversary of the *Fascist* genocide was suggested as a potential solution to the 'Jewish problem.'

THE BRITISH UNION OF FASCISTS

This was all in sharp contrast to the stance adopted by Mosley in the early years of the BUF. Mosley's association with antisemitism pre-dates the BUF and Dorril points to his calculated use of antisemitic campaigns in the New Party.⁹⁸ Referring to the New Party, Mosley had declared that 'a new movement must find somebody or something to hate' and it seems the Jews fitted the bill.⁹⁹ However, initially, the BUF did not officially sanction antisemitism. Holmes notes that the BUF did not run a major antisemitic campaign until 1936, though there were antisemitic elements in the BUF from the beginning. He identifies an increasing level of antisemitism from 1934 onwards, though this is of the more traditional cultural type rather than the biological, racial antisemitism of the IFL.¹⁰⁰ Richard Thurlow and Thomas Linehan both agree that antisemitism increased from 1934 onwards when the leadership officially adopted a policy of antisemitism.¹⁰¹ Prior to this the leadership of the BUF had insisted that antisemitism was not permitted, despite the activities of many members and the frequent antisemitic references in the BUF press. Articles and letters in *Blackshirt*, which was aimed at activists within the movement, displayed a much greater degree of antisemitism than those in *Action*, which targeted a more general readership and adopted a format closer to that of the mainstream popular press.

Analysis of the BUF press supports this interpretation: a *Blackshirt* editorial in May 1933 states that Mosley had 'issued strict instructions that there was to be no form of Jew-baiting and has emphasised frequently that the movement is in no way anti-Semitic'; the editorial goes on to claim that large numbers of Jews are anti-fascist, but despite this the BUF 'have not sought any struggle with them, but we do not shrink from struggles which are forced upon us.'¹⁰² However, although no major

antisemitic campaign was launched until 1936, within the pages of the *Blackshirt* there was a continuing series of attacks on Jews. In November 1933 the *Blackshirt* claimed again that the BUF was not antisemitic; a couple of sentences later it alleged that Jews were attempting to involve Britain in a war with Germany. Two weeks later the claim that the BUF was not antisemitic was reiterated, but this was followed by a list of those it would 'ruthlessly exterminate' - all those listed were stereotypically associated by antisemites with Jews.¹⁰³ The article also claimed that 'Jews repeatedly make cowardly attacks on our members.'¹⁰⁴ The BUF appeared to have adopted the tactic of prefacing antisemitic attacks with a claim that the BUF was not antisemitic.

Throughout 1934 there were articles in the *Blackshirt* attacking 'international finance' and 'alien money,' which the readership would understand meant Jews.¹⁰⁵ Following the violence at the Olympia meeting on 7 June 1934 and Lord Rothermere's consequent withdrawal of support, which Mosley attributed to pressure from Jewish advertisers, there was a noticeable increase in the level of antisemitic content in the *Blackshirt's* articles and in the speeches it reported, culminating in Mosley's speech at the Albert Hall on 28 October 1934. The report of the Albert Hall rally included Mosley's claim that he had taken up the challenge presented by 'the power of organised Jewry, which is today mobilised against Fascism.'¹⁰⁶ By the end of November 1934 the headlines were becoming more explicit.¹⁰⁷ For the next two years reports of Mosley's speeches show an increased focus on Jews, and attacks on 'Jewish international finance' and 'Jewish influence in politics and industry' became prominent elements when BUF speakers addressed rallies and meetings.¹⁰⁸ During this period the *Blackshirt* no longer relied on its readers making the link between 'international finance' and Jews, instead it made it clear that they were indivisible.

In 1935, while still trying to distance the BUF from 'extremists' such as Leese, the *Blackshirt* praised the 'natural and healthy antisemitism which is always to be found in areas thickly populated by Jews.'¹⁰⁹ Around this time the letters column included many letters attacking Jews for being involved in finance and crime and for a variety of other, bizarre, reasons including 'putting three stones in the coffins to be thrown by the dead at the Virgin Mary, her husband, and their Son,' for being a 'unscrupulous, wicked people,' the 'implacable enemy of Jesus Christ and all Christendom' and 'working for the supremacy of the Jewish race.'¹¹⁰

The rising tide of antisemitism in the *Blackshirt*, which had been building steadily during 1935, came to a peak in 1936. March saw the introduction of the regular column 'Jolly Judah' by Angus McNab. Dedicated to showing Jews as alien and parasitic, it featured a collection of 'news' items and reports from other papers designed to discredit them. While the tone of the column was not quite as obsessive as the *Fascist's* 'News from the Jewish Front,' its methods and purpose were remarkably similar. The World Jewish Congress was referred to as 'these elders of Zion,' the daubing of Epstein's statue 'Rima' with paint was welcomed, Jews were criticised for owning chain-stores, and the conviction of two men for selling obscene postcards was reported, apparently because one of them had a Jewish name.¹¹¹ A series of articles by John Beckett exposing the alleged extent of Jewish control of the British press also began in March. Beckett concluded the series by questioning the role of 'an alien minority' with 'such a great voice in deciding what we shall know. We have certainly found the reason why much important news never reaches the ears of our people at all.'¹¹²

No opportunity to denigrate Jews was missed. In August 1936 Alexander Raven Thomson dismissed suggestions that Jews had made a significant contribution

to Britain's cause in the First World War, supporting his argument with a dubious use of statistics.¹¹³ In similar vein a correspondent wrote sneeringly of the Jewish ex-servicemen's march, describing the former soldiers as a 'mob of conscripts' with few medals.¹¹⁴ September saw the first of a series designed to counter the publication of pro-Jewish leaflets. The article claimed that the BUF did not attack individual Jews, but then went on to supply selective details of five Jews involved in vice and fraud cases; at least one of the five, Samuel Insull, was found not guilty when eventually tried. However, he was still included, 'as an outstanding example of the power of Jewish finance.'¹¹⁵ Another regular column, 'Through Fascist Eyes,' claimed that twenty five per cent of the world's drug dealers were Jewish, and that Jews were over-represented in German crime statistics.¹¹⁶

Articles and reports in *Action*, first published in February 1936 generally adopted a low-key approach to antisemitism. In February the theatre critic complained that 'the Press' had praised a Jewish actress leading him to expect that she 'will be radiant - one of those women of whom there is perhaps one in a generation - gracious, loyal, witty and charming. But no. She is Jewry's jewel - thick at the waist and a little eastern in movement,' a competent performer 'with nothing to indicate the quality of genius.' The critic goes on to say that better performances have been given by British actresses. He was also disconcerted by members of the audience, in particular '... a negligent inelegant hand whose movements ostentatiously beating the rhythm of the orchestra, display to the best advantage a huge emerald ring. On my left is a sulky Jewess. On my right an American Jew.' The justification for describing these theatre-goers lies in the whispered comment of the attendant selling chocolate "ang together don't they, the Jews?"¹¹⁷ This type of comment, while unpleasant, belongs to the first, stereotypical, category of antisemitism.

More significant were the regular articles by William Joyce that claimed to reveal 'the intensified Jewish conspiracy for war,' criticised the government for favouring Jews at the expense of 'British people,' and made allegations of Jewish violence against fascists.¹¹⁸ Other sections of the paper reiterated the charges of Jewish violence.¹¹⁹ Articles in *Action* included suggestions that Jews took jobs needed by British workers, and that communism was spread by Jews.¹²⁰ In an article in February 1936, criticising the imposition of sanctions on Italy, Mosley referred to the Soviet delegate to the League of Nations as 'the Jew Litvinoff.'¹²¹ *Action* also made references to the alleged Jewish control of the national press and the cinema.¹²² Despite these examples, the level of antisemitic content in *Action* was much less than in the *Blackshirt*, reflecting the difference between their target audiences: *Action* was designed for a wider, less committed readership than the *Blackshirt*.

In the *Blackshirt* antisemitism continued unabated and reports show an increase in the number of meetings held in areas with high concentrations of Jews in the local population, particularly in the East End of London, but also in Manchester and other cities, as the BUF's antisemitic campaign gathered pace.¹²³ In November 1936 Mosley held two meetings in the East End on the same evening and at both he spoke about 'corrupt Jewish interests' and the attempts of Jewry to break the BUF.¹²⁴ Around this time in the *Blackshirt* and at BUF meetings regular attacks on the Public Order Act, which would come into effect in January 1937 and restricted the wearing of uniforms, the formation of quasi-military organisations, and gave the police powers to prohibit political marches, were common. Reginald Gibbs claimed that it was the Jews who caused trouble, but it was the BUF who were punished.¹²⁵ Allegations of dubious business practices that were alleged to harm British businesses and workers were also raised on a regular basis.¹²⁶

The reports of BUF meetings published in the *Blackshirt* delight in describing the firm handling of those who attempted to heckle or prevent the meetings taking place. Invariably these opponents were described in unflattering and offensive terms and left the reader in no doubt that they were Jewish. Mosley was alleged to have been attacked by a 'horde of Jew-led hooligans.'¹²⁷ Headlines such as 'Jew Brutalities' list alleged attacks on young BUF members or women by groups of men who were 'unmistakably Jewish.'¹²⁸ It was claimed that a BUF speaker was beaten and kicked unconscious when he went to the aid of a female being attacked by Jews. The *Blackshirt* complained that the national press did not report attacks on BUF members, but would report the eviction of communists from BUF meetings.¹²⁹ The *Telegraph* did report an attack on Mosley in June 1937, but reports of activities involving the BUF were rare in the mainstream press except for the *Mail* during the period January to July 1934, when Lord Rothermere gave the BUF, or the Blackshirts as he preferred to call them, the support of his paper.

From 1937 the pace of the BUF's antisemitic campaign abated somewhat. The 'Jolly Judah' column continued, Jews were accused of warmongering and using the national press to campaign against Germany, the behaviour of Jews during air raids in the First World War was criticised, and there was a campaign to highlight alleged Jewish sharp practice in relation to hire-purchase agreements.¹³⁰ In November 1937 the American poet Ezra Pound began to write articles for *Action*; he was already a regular contributor to *British Union Quarterly*.¹³¹ From March 1938 Pound's column became a fairly regular feature and it was frequently laced with antisemitic references and snide comments about Jews.¹³² However, he did not restrict his comments about usurers to one faith, Protestants were also lambasted and Quakers were described as more dangerous than Jews.¹³³ Another addition was the occasional appearance of the

‘Kronicles of Klemenzen Brunovitch,’ the reflections of a fictitious East End tailor who reported the actions of a range of stereotypical Jewish characters emphasising their allegedly cowardly and venal nature.¹³⁴ The ‘Kronicles’ were unpleasant, but lacked the vicious force of Joyce’s contributions. More significantly, in December 1937 *Blackshirt* carried an advert for the *Protocols of Zion*.¹³⁵

Generally, however, the BUF’s antisemitic campaign lacked the force and energy it had shown between 1935 and 1936, reflecting both the impact of the Public Order Act and also the departure, in March 1937, of two of the BUF’s most virulent antisemites, Joyce and Beckett, due to the financial problems the BUF were experiencing following the loss of Mussolini’s subsidy.¹³⁶ The BUF’s financial crisis continued and membership, which had been in decline since the loss of the publicity provided by the *Mail* shrank to an estimated figure of less than 6,000. In February 1938 the number of BUF staff was reduced further, and from March *Blackshirt* was published monthly instead of weekly.

Despite the continual denials of antisemitism it is clear from the evidence presented that the BUF press published antisemitic material from its earliest issues. The level of antisemitic content fluctuated depending on the degree of official sanction it received from the BUF leadership and on the intended readership, but it was never entirely absent. However, regardless of the presence of racial antisemites such as Joyce and Beckett, the antisemitic output of the BUF papers remained consistent with the two outer circles of the model and there was no evidence of the biological antisemitism that is typical of the fanatical antisemite associated with the model’s inner core.

ANTISEMITISM IN THE MAINSTREAM PRESS

Expressions of antisemitic sentiments were far less frequent in the mainstream press. This is not to say that antisemitism did not exist outside of the pages of the fascist press. There were several journals and papers, including the *Patriot* and the *Morning Post*, that regularly expounded antisemitic views, but they were confined to the margins and had relatively small circulations.¹³⁷ Other papers also occasionally published stereotypical comments relating to Jews and, more regularly, blatantly antisemitic letters. These occurred more frequently in the local and provincial press, but there were also examples in the national papers.¹³⁸ Yet, as Andrew Sharf has noted, it is impossible to judge the extent of popular support for these sentiments from the available evidence. Sharf suggests that, while there is evidence that Jews were seen as ‘different’ and disliked accordingly by some, including a vocal antisemitic minority, antisemitic views were not widely held.¹³⁹ Tony Kushner disputes this and argues that, while exclusionist antisemites were in the minority, British Jews also experienced a ‘liberal’ form of antisemitism that was related to the concept of an ‘emancipation contract.’ This is based on the supposition that antisemitism would end when society began to tolerate Jews and, in response to the host community’s toleration, Jews became a less distinctive group within the community. Kushner argues that liberal antisemitism, therefore, attributes continued antisemitism in a tolerant society to the failure or refusal of Jews to assimilate sufficiently, that is, if antisemitism continued it was the fault of the Jews.¹⁴⁰

Additionally, Kushner also identifies a second, ‘conservative’ or exclusionist variation of British antisemitism that rejects the concept of assimilation and regards all Jews as inherently alien. These exclusionist antisemites responded to the perceived threat represented by the presence of Jews in Britain by demanding their expulsion,

and by refusing to countenance the admittance of any more.¹⁴¹ Kushner's theory offers a different perspective for considering the degree and extent of antisemitism in the mainstream press, one which is potentially useful in differentiating the stance of the various strands of the mainstream press and will be especially relevant when considering attitudes to refugees in the following chapter.

While journalists with antisemitic views were employed by the mainstream press, for example Douglas Reed by the *Times* and G. Ward Price by the *Mail*, there is no evidence of a consistently antisemitic line being adopted by the mainstream press and examples of stereotyping and alarmist commentary tended to relate to those Jews who had recently arrived in Britain, a theme that will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.¹⁴² Generally 'British' Jews were specifically excepted from stereotypical descriptions of 'aliens' and were praised for their efforts in aiding more recent arrivals from Eastern Europe.¹⁴³ This approval of Jews who, though they might experience low levels of social antisemitism, were considered to have integrated well goes some way to supporting Tony Kushner's argument that there is a liberal form of antisemitism that is related to the concept of the 'emancipation contract.'

Significantly, examination of the national papers shows that individual Jews were not singled out or attacked by the mainstream press because they were Jews, and their involvement in newsworthy incidents was reported in the same way as that of other people; the court and society columns reported the activities of prominent Jews in exactly the same fashion as other society or political figures.¹⁴⁴ This reflected the extent to which Anglo-Jewry had integrated into British society.

Events that antisemites might be expected to exploit to illustrate unfavourable Jewish stereotypes were handled objectively, and sometimes even sympathetically, as

can be seen between 1932-34 in the reporting of the Insull case. Insull was a Jewish financier facing extradition from France, and later Greece, to America where he was to be indicted on charges of embezzlement and larceny. The *Mail* described him as 'once a poor Jewish boy in Whitechapel, [who] rose to be one of the most spectacular figures in American finance.'¹⁴⁵ Later coverage was also sympathetic, giving a positive appreciation of his business career and explaining that his companies might still be solvent as the collapse was a result of his attempt to resist a hostile take-over bid. The reporting of the case by the *Express* was similar but less extensive. Insull was described as 'coming home' to Reading.¹⁴⁶ The initial reports of the case in the *Times* are more objective, mentioning only the indictments and omitting the human interest detail of his origins; there are, however, references to his charitable donations in several items relating to a London hospital.¹⁴⁷ Following Insull's death in July 1938 the *Times* published a lengthy obituary, giving details of his birth in Westminster, his association with Thomas Edison and his subsequent business career, the legal action that ensued and Insull's eventual acquittal.¹⁴⁸ Revealingly, in the *Fascist* Arnold Leese complained that in the *Times*' obituary notice 'of that shady gentleman Samuel Insull, not a sign was given that he was a Jew.'¹⁴⁹

Jews, as a 'race,' did not receive much press interest, although during 1932 the *Express* drew attention, more than once, to the reluctance or outright refusal of some insurance companies to issue policies to Jewish clients. This sparked a vigorous correspondence from which the *Express* printed a selection representing a variety of opinions.¹⁵⁰ Editorial opinion was critical of the insurers, claiming that they were 'discriminating in a wholesale way against the Jews,' including those 'whose honesty has never been questioned.'¹⁵¹ This implied that there were Jews whose honesty was questionable. Additionally, the front page of the same issue carried extensive quotes

from insurance companies alleging that 'Jews are notoriously bad and careless drivers' and that 'there are certain classes of business - gowns, millinery, furs, and wireless - which, if conducted by Jews, can not get cover for fire and burglary.'¹⁵² The statements go on to imply that the majority of claims from Jews were fraudulent or inflated. In fairness it should be said that the *Express* often printed controversial views, which it did not necessarily share, in an attempt to stimulate debate and generate interest in the paper.

The *Express* prided itself on a reputation for balanced coverage and claimed to be offering readers the opportunity to make up their own minds on topical issues. So it is not surprising that, a little later the paper featured articles that attempted to show Jews and their activities in a more positive light, including a rebuttal of allegations of dishonesty against Jews as a race, photographs of the Chief Rabbi at the Beth Din, accompanied by an explanation of the function and methods of the court, and an article on the Jewish New Year which, while recognising that Jews were often regarded as 'the worshippers of Mammon and materialism,' gave a positive image of the Jewish faith, concentrating on repentance, prayer and charity.¹⁵³ An editorial in July 1932 argued that "Perish Judea!" the 'slogan of the Hitlerites' would be 'the epitaph of Germany' if Hitlerism prevailed.¹⁵⁴ Persecution was firmly rejected and the contribution of the Jewish community recognised.

In contrast, reports in the *Mirror* relating to Jews were generally neutral in tone and tended to be restricted to occasions that quirked public interest, such as the visits of royalty to various Jewish organisations, the award of honours to Jewish notables, and unusual occurrences such as the publication of a Jewish cook book or the installation of a kosher kitchen in a cruise liner.¹⁵⁵ However, the *Mirror* did print an article by Andrew Souter, 'Here's to the Jews,' which, while Souter claimed to be

neither for nor against Jews, employed a patronising tone and used stereotypical figures to categorise the race as a whole.¹⁵⁶

Notably, even when espousing the fascist cause the *Mail* did not overtly adopt its antisemitic precepts, concentrating instead on BUF policies that matched Lord Rothermere's concerns. The January 1934 article by Lord Rothermere headlined 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts,' accompanied by a sympathetic editorial, made no mention of 'alien influences,' 'international finance,' or Jews in any form.¹⁵⁷ Coverage of a meeting addressed by Joyce in Chiswick on 18 January 1934 reports no antisemitic topics, although Joyce did make antisemitic remarks in response to questions.¹⁵⁸

Subsequent reports are similarly reticent on the subject of Jews. Opponents of the BUF, particularly those involved in violent altercations, are described by the *Mail* as 'Red bullies,' 'Red hooligans,' and the 'Red terror.'¹⁵⁹ However, there were coded antisemitic references to the 'entanglements of cosmopolitan finance,' and 'people from the ghetto.'¹⁶⁰ Links were also made between 'aliens' and Bolshevism, which was described as 'the work of crafty and ruthless men. They operate secretly, with the aid of foreign money' to achieve 'Red revolution in Great Britain.'¹⁶¹ Following the violence of the BUF's Olympia meeting in June 1934 the *Mail* complained that 'a disorderly Red crowd was allowed to proceed from the east of London ... It was largely composed of aliens.'¹⁶² Shortly before abandoning the BUF the *Mail* began to adopt the BUF tactic of denying antisemitic tendencies while criticising Jews, for example it decried the 'utterly baseless fiction that the Blackshirt Movement is anti-Jewish,' and argued that 'Severely though the Blackshirts have suffered from the violent assaults of mobs of Bolshevik-subsidised Jewish Communists in the East End of London and many industrial areas, they have no desire or intention to persecute the

Jews. Had they any such purpose they would not be receiving the support of *The Daily Mail*.¹⁶³ By mid-July, however, Rothermere had ended the *Mail*'s support for the BUF on the grounds that he 'never could support any movement with an antisemitic bias, any movement which had dictatorship as one of its objectives, or any movement which would substitute a "corporate state" for the Parliamentary institutions of this country.'¹⁶⁴ This seems a little disingenuous on Rothermere's part, as the BUF's policy regarding the latter issues had not changed between January and July 1934 and antisemitic attacks had frequently appeared in the pages of the BUF press.

The London based papers were clearly not antisemitic, but neither could they be said to be overtly philo-semitic. The nationally renowned *Manchester Guardian*, however, clearly celebrated and encouraged the activities of the local Jewish community with regular reports of a wide variety of Jewish clubs and societies.¹⁶⁵ The educational, cultural, and charitable work of these groups was praised and co-operation between Jewish and non-Jewish organisations was welcomed.¹⁶⁶

CONCLUSION

The expression of antisemitism across the British fascist press was not consistent. Only the IFL developed a racially based antisemitism, and this can be largely ascribed to Leese being the sole arbiter of policy during most of the IFL's existence. The influence of Beamish and Günther was fundamental to Leese's antisemitic evolution, however, his racial policies were developed independently of the Nazi regime. The antisemitism of the BF and the BUF fluctuated depending on the prevailing attitude of their leadership, but remained within the range of traditional British far-right exclusionist antisemites. The antisemitism of the BF was rooted in the pre-existing

antipathy of its leading members and was linked to fear of the alleged conspiracies of 'International Finance' and the spread of communism, both of which the BUF believed to be advanced by Jews. The foregrounding of antisemitism in 1933 was part of an attempt to introduce a more radical programme in a futile effort to revitalise the movement. Variations in the level of antisemitism expressed by the BUF were related to power struggles within its hierarchy. The increased level of antisemitism following the withdrawal of Rothermere's support was largely a response to dwindling membership, and to what was perceived as Jewish aggression. Repeated references to Jewish control of industry, finance, political parties and the press reinforced the BUF's sense of isolation from the mainstream and encouraged members' reliance on the movement.

Analysis of the mainstream press has not shown conclusive evidence to support Tony Kushner's argument that the 'emancipation contract' had led to British Jews being blamed for antisemitism. There is no criticism of their distinct religious practices or failure to assimilate. During the 1930s the mainstream press appeared content with the existence of discrete Jewish communities within the wider society. However, there was some evidence of pressure on recent arrivals to conform, and, as will be seen in the next chapter, the activities of Jews in continental Europe were more likely to be thought to have contributed to antisemitism, which would support Kushner's concept of 'liberal' antisemitism. Overall the evidence indicates that examples of antisemitism were rare and that antisemitism was not a feature of the mainstream press in Britain between the wars. Overt antisemitism appeared to be socially unacceptable and the continual denigration of the Jews in the fascist press does not reflect the attitudes of the mainstream, even in a distorted way. Expressions of the milder forms of antisemitism, as typified in the first category of the model, may

reflect the extent of antisemitism present among the general public, but as Holmes pointed out we cannot be sure of this as there is no way to measure public opinion retrospectively. Even the publication of readers' letters with an antisemitic content does not imply that the mainstream press supported those views. Letters were published from a wide variety of viewpoints and it remains common practice for controversial letters to be published in order to stimulate debate. As Sharf noted the extent of antisemitism in Britain cannot be estimated from the number of antisemitic letters printed in the mainstream press as many of those who write to the papers might be cranks or represent minority views.¹⁶⁷ The only reliable indicator is that the mainstream press were not regularly expressing antisemitic views and massively outsold publications that did. It is apparent that the antisemitic opinions of the fascist press were not an extension of mainstream opinion, but, particularly those calling for restrictions on Jewish civil liberties or their expulsion from Britain, were a considerable departure from them. In the case of those such as Leese and Joyce who expressed a genocidal desire for the elimination of all Jews the boundary between civilised behaviour and barbarism had clearly been crossed.

¹ Extracts from this chapter appear in 'Beyond the Pale? - Antisemitism and the British Fascist and National press 1925-1939', *Holocaust Studies* (forthcoming 2010).

² Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (Routledge, London, 1991), p.48. See also Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914-45* (UCL Press, London, 1995), p. 11; and Roger Eatwell, *Fascism: A History* (Pimlico, London, 2003), p. xxiii.

³ M. T. Clancy, *Early Medieval England* (Folio, London, 1997), p. 321. M. H. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages* (Folio, London, 1997), p. xxii.

⁴ Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000*, (University of California Press, Berkely, 2002), pp. 24-7.

⁵ Leonard P. Zakim and Janice Ditchek, *Confronting Anti-Semitism* (Ktav, Hoboken, 2000), p. 110.

⁶ Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* (Edward Arnold, London, 1979), pp.10-2. Disraeli was Conservative Prime Minister briefly in 1868, and between 1874-1880. For examples of the Conservative Party's antisemitic attitudes towards their party leader see Harry Defries, *Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews 1900-1950* (Frank Cass, London, 2001), pp. 5, & 209. G. C. Webber suggests that the antisemitism of the 1920s reflected middle-class anxiety regarding industrial unrest and aristocratic concern over industrial development and was very different from that of the 1930s, which was underpinned by working-class alarm triggered by fears of immigration. G. C. Webber, 'Intolerance and Discretion: Conservatives and British Fascism, 1918-1926' in Tony Kushner and Ken Lunn (eds), *Traditions of Intolerance* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1989), p. 161.

⁷ William D. Rubinstein, *Israel, the Jews, and the West* (The Social Affairs Unit, London, 2008), pp. 15-6; Gisela C. Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939* (Macmillan, London, 1978), p. 27.

⁸ Rubinstein, *Israel, the Jews, and the West*, p.15.

⁹ Tony Kushner, 'The impact of British Anti-semitism 1918-1945' in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990), p. 192.

¹⁰ Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* (Edward Arnold, London, 1979), pp. 141-6, & 227.

¹¹ Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, pp. 104 & 218.

¹² William I. Brustein, *Roots of Hate*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003), pp.18-25. Brustein's intent was to demonstrate, using newspapers from five European countries, that there were temporal and spatial variations in antisemitism between 1899-1939 thereby questioning the causal role of political culture as argued by Daniel J. Goldhagen et al. Brustein, pp. 4, & 40-3.

¹³ Israel Pocket Library, *Anti-Semitism* (Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem, 1974), p. 33, cites Wilhelm Marr as the first to use the term.

¹⁴ Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism*, p. 2.

¹⁵ Lebzelter, p. 2; Richard S. Levy, *Antisemitism in the Modern World* (D. C. Heath & Co., Lexington, 1991), p. 5. Although French Jews were emancipated following the

-
- 1789 Revolution, British Jews did not gain full political rights until 1871. Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, pp. 8 & 222.
- ¹⁶ Lebzelter, pp. 2-3.
- ¹⁷ Levy, pp. 3-5.
- ¹⁸ Brustein, pp. 9-10.
- ¹⁹ See *G. K's Weekly*, 18 July 1925, p. 399 cited in Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, p. 313.
- ²⁰ Colin Holmes, 'Anti-Semitism and the BUF' in Kenneth Lunn & Richard C. Thurlow, *British Fascism* (Edward Arnold, London, 1980), pp. 115.
- ²¹ Michael Marrus, 'The Theory and Practice of Anti-Semitism,' *Commentary*, vol. 74, no. 2 (August 1982), pp. 39-41.
<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewarticle.cfm/the-theory-and-practice-of-anti-semitism-6592?mode=addview>.
- ²² Albert S. Lindemann, *Esau's Tears* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997), pp. 24-6.
- ²³ Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain* (I. B. Tauris, London, 1998), p. 35. Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918-1939* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000), pp. 177-8, and Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism*, p. 70 also mention the BF adopting antisemitism in the 1930s.
- ²⁴ Kenneth Lunn, 'The Ideology and Impact of the British Fascists in the 1920s' in Tony Kushner & Kenneth Lunn (eds), *Traditions of Intolerance* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1989), pp. 150-151.
- ²⁵ *Fascist Bulletin*, 6 Mar 1926, p. 1.
- ²⁶ *Fascist Bulletin*, 20 Mar 1926, p. 5. See also 26 September 1926, p. 1 & 6 March 1926, p. 1.
- ²⁷ *British Lion*, Jul 1926, p. 7.
- ²⁸ *British Lion*, No. 27, p.4, undated, but content would suggest sometime during July-August 1928.
- ²⁹ For examples of the use of material from the *Patriot* see *Fascist Bulletin*, 5 September 1925, p.1 & 29 May 1926, p. Also *British Lion*, July 1926, p.7. For a detailed analysis of the *Patriot's* content see Markku Ruotsila, 'The Antisemitism of the Eighth Duke of Northumberland's the *Patriot*, 1922-1930', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 39 no.1 (2004), pp. 71-92.

-
- ³⁰ *Fascist Bulletin*, 13 Jun 1925, pp.1 & 2.
- ³¹ *Fascist Bulletin*, 20 Jun 1925, p. 3; 4 Jul 1925, p. 1; 11 Jul 1925, p. 1; 19 Dec 1925, p. 1.
- ³² *Fascist Bulletin*, 25 Jul 1925, p. 2.
- ³³ *Fascist Bulletin*, 15 Aug 1925, p.2; 5 Sep 1925, pp1, 3 & 4; *British Fascism*, Oct 1933, p. 2.
- ³⁴ *Fascist Bulletin*, 15 Jul 1925, pp. 2 & 3. See also 5 Sep 1925, p. 1, which featured a letter reprinted from the *Patriot* advising readers to 'Study finance carefully with the aid of the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, as that is the cause of our troubles.'
- ³⁵ *Fascist Bulletin*, 20 Mar 1926, p. 6.
- ³⁶ *British Lion*, Mar 1929, p. 8. There was also a later reference to the protocols in relation to an alleged Jewish attempt to conquer South Africa, see *British Fascism* 1 Jan 1932, pp. 4-5.
- ³⁷ *British Fascism*, Nov 1931, p. 4.
- ³⁸ *Fascist Bulletin*, 25 Jul 1925, p. 1.
- ³⁹ For a brief description of the BF's organisational structure see Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 62-3.
- ⁴⁰ *Fascist Bulletin*, 25 Jul 1925, p. 1.
- ⁴¹ *Fascist Bulletin*, 25 Jul 1925, p. 1.
- ⁴² *Fascist Bulletin*, 5 Jun 1926, p. 4.
- ⁴³ Devlin Leigh, 'Why we are anti-Semitic,' *British Fascism*, Extra Autumn Issue 1933, p. 7.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid. See also 1 Mar 1932, pp. 6-7 which also refers to a high proportion of criminals in the Jewish population.
- ⁴⁷ *British Fascism*, Jun 1934, p. 2; Special Summer Propaganda Number, 1933, p. 6.
- ⁴⁸ A. W. E. Whitmore, 'Political Notes,' *British Fascism*, Extra Autumn Issue 1933 p. 3.
- ⁴⁹ For a more detailed examination of the BF's ideological and organisational splits see Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, pp.34-7, and Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 61-8.

-
- ⁵⁰ J. E. Morell, *The Life and Opinions of A. S. Leese* (M.A. University of Sheffield, 1975), pp.115, 150, & 160; & 'Arnold Leese and the Imperial Fascist League: The Impact of Racial Fascism' in Lunn & Thurlow, *British Fascism*, pp. 70-71
- ⁵¹ Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right* (London, 1980), p. 96.
- ⁵² Colin Cross, *Fascists in Britain* (London, 1961), p. 122.
- ⁵³ Cross, pp. 64-5.
- ⁵⁴ *Völkischer Beobachter* was described by Leese as 'the leading Nazi paper in *Fascist*, 27, Aug 1931, p. 4. See also 24, May 1931, p. 1. The first cartoon appeared in January 1931, there was another in March 1931, and again in December 1931; following that there were none until October 1933 when they began to appear regularly on the front page.
- ⁵⁵ Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism*, pp. 73-4. The *Protocols* are not referred to directly until 1931.
- ⁵⁶ Holmes, p. 163.
- ⁵⁷ *Fascist*, Mar 1929 & May 1929, pp. 1, 3-4.
- ⁵⁸ Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism*, p.74.
- ⁵⁹ For example see *Fascist*, 8, Oct 1929, p. 4; & 14, Jun 1930, p. 2.
- ⁶⁰ For example see *Fascist*, 9, Nov 1929, p. 2; 12, Apr 1930, p. 3; & 18, Nov 1930, p. 1; & *Gothic Ripples*, 68, 20th Sept 1950, p. 2.
- ⁶¹ For example see *Fascist*, Apr 1930, p. 4; 19, Dec 1930, p. 4; 25 Jun 1931, p. 1; 28 Sept 1931, p. 1; & 29 Oct 1931, p. 2.
- ⁶² *Fascist*, Sept 1931, pp. 1 & 2.
- ⁶³ For example see *Fascist*, Dec 1929-Jan 1930, p. 2; February-March 1930, p. 2; Apr 1930, p. 1; May 1930, p. 1; Sep 1930, p. 2; Oct 1930, p. 2; Feb 1931, p. 2; Sept 1931, pp 1, & 2; & Nov 1931, p.1.
- ⁶⁴ *Fascist*, Jun 1931, p. 2. In 26, Jul 1931, p. 2, the outline of the supposed plot was printed, and in Aug 1931, pp. 2-4, there were extensive quotes from the *Protocols*.
- ⁶⁵ *Fascist*, Jul 1929, p. 1.
- ⁶⁶ *Fascist*, Oct 1929, p. 4.
- ⁶⁷ *Fascist*, Sep 1931, p. 1.
- ⁶⁸ *Fascist*, Sep 1930, p. 4.
- ⁶⁹ See for example, *Fascist*, Sep 1932, p. 4; & December 1932, p. 4. Hans Günther (1891-1968) was the author of *The Racial Elements of European History*, (London,

1927). He was appointed to the chair of Social Anthropology at the University of Jena by Wilhelm Frick, and later became Professor of Racial Sciences at the University of Freiberg. When World War II ended he continued to promote his racial theories.

⁷⁰ *Fascist*, Oct 1930, p. 1.

⁷¹ *Fascist*, Dec 1930, p. 1.

⁷² *Fascist*, Mar 1931, p. 4.

⁷³ *Fascist*, Mar 1931, p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Fascist*, Mar 1931, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁵ *Fascist*, Jun 1931, p. 2; July 1931, p. 2; & August 1931, pp. 2-4.

⁷⁶ *Fascist*, Aug 1931, p. 3; & 30, Nov 1931, p. 3.

⁷⁷ *Fascist*, Jan 1932, p. 1. The article is by 'J. R. H.'

⁷⁸ Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism*, pp. 77, & 80.

⁷⁹ 'There need not be a scrap of violence or ill-feeling, but the result will be the same as of a wholesale massacre or expulsion. The race that betrays its own standards of values, so that another less developed may live among it on a basis of equality, will completely disappear, its culture with it.' *Fascist*, Jun 1938, p. 5.

⁸⁰ *Fascist*, May 1936, p.2.

⁸¹ *Fascist*, Jan 1933, p. 4.

⁸² See for example, *Fascist*, Aug 1933, p. 1; Jul 1934, p. 2; Nov 1934, p. 1; Jun 1935, p. 2; Aug 1935, p. 1; & Jul 1937, p. 4.

⁸³ *Fascist*, Jul 1936, p. 5.

⁸⁴ See for example, *Fascist*, Jan 1933, p. 1.

⁸⁵ *Fascist*, Sept 1932, p. 3.

⁸⁶ *Fascist*, Jun 1934, p. 2.

⁸⁷ *Fascist*, Jul 1936, p. 5. See also p. 4, for an article by J. H. H. quoting the history of Dio Cassius which claims that the Jews 'slew the Romans and Greeks, and devoured their bodies, drank the blood, clothed themselves in the flayed skins and sawed many in half from the head downwards.'

⁸⁸ *Fascist*, Jul 1936, p. 5. It was for this issue of the *Fascist* that Leese and his printer were charged with seditious libel and also public mischief. They were acquitted of the more serious charge, but found guilty of public mischief. The printer was fined £20; Leese refused to pay a fine and was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

-
- ⁸⁹ *Fascist*, Jul 1936, p. 5.
- ⁹⁰ See Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (Pearson, Harlow, 1995, 2nd ed.), pp. 39-42.
- ⁹¹ *Fascist*, Mar 1935, pp. 4-5; Jun 1935, pp. 4-5; Sep 1935, p.1; & Sep 1937, p.1.
- ⁹² *Fascist*, Jun 1933, p. 2. Mendel's work was not widely known until the beginning of the twentieth century.
- ⁹³ *Fascist*, Apr 1934, p.4; & May 1936, p. 3.
- ⁹⁴ *Fascist*, Feb 1935, p. 2. Leese was not unique in advocating the lethal chamber as a remedy for society's ills. Dan Stone highlights the interest in eugenic circles, prior to the First World War, in this method for eradicating the unfit. He suggests the term drops out of common usage between the wars, re-appearing only occasionally. Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2002), pp. 125-30.
- ⁹⁵ *Fascist*, Feb 1935, p. 2; 104, Jan 1938, p. 2.
- ⁹⁶ See J. Noakes & G. Pridham (eds.), *Nazism 1919-1945 Volume 2 State, Economy and Society 1933-1939* (University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1995), pp. 535-9; & Burleigh, Michael, & Wippermann, Wolfgang, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), pp. 45-7.
- ⁹⁷ *Fascist*, Feb 1935, p. 2.
- ⁹⁸ Stephen Dorril, *Blackshirt Sir Oswald Mosley and British Fascism* (Viking, London, 2006), pp. 207, 208, & 210.
- ⁹⁹ Cited in Dorril, p. 212.
- ¹⁰⁰ Holmes, 'Anti-Semitism and the BUF', pp. 120-1 & 128.
- ¹⁰¹ Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, pp. 73-81. Linehan, pp. 99-103.
- ¹⁰² *Blackshirt*, 16 May 1933, p. 2
- ¹⁰³ The list included fire insurance swindlers, white slavers, drug smugglers, fraudulent bankrupts, pimps and pornographers. *Blackshirt*, 18 Nov 1933, p. 1.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Blackshirt*, 4 Nov 1933; & 18 Nov 1933
- ¹⁰⁵ *Blackshirt*, 1 Jun 1934, p. 7; 8 Jun 1934, p. 3; 19 Oct 1934, p. 8; & 26 Oct 1934, p. 9.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Blackshirt*, 2 Nov 1934, pp. 1 & 2.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Blackshirt*, 30 Nov 1934, p. 2.

-
- ¹⁰⁸ *Blackshirt*, 30 Nov 1934, pp. 1-3; 15 Feb 1935, p. 1; 26 Jul 1935, p. 5; 2 Aug 1935, pp. 1 & 5.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Blackshirt*, 4 Oct 1935, p. 9.
- ¹¹⁰ *Blackshirt*, 13 Sept 1935, p. 11; 4 Oct 1935, p. 11; 25 Oct 1935, p. 7; & 1 Nov 1935, p. 7.
- ¹¹¹ *Blackshirt*, 6 Mar 1936, p. 8; 29 Aug 1936, p. 8; 7 Nov 1936, P. 2; & 28 Nov 1936, p. 2.
- ¹¹² *Blackshirt*, 6 Mar 1936, p. 6; 13 Mar 1936, p. 6. The series then continued in *Action* 6 Mar 1936, p. 4; 12 Mar 1936, p. 4; 19 Mar 1936, p. 4; 2 Apr 1936, p. 7; 9 April 1936, p. 7.
- ¹¹³ *Blackshirt*, 8 August 1936, p. 1.
- ¹¹⁴ *Blackshirt*, 21 November 1936, p. 4.
- ¹¹⁵ 'Jews to whom we owe everything,' *The Blackshirt*, 5 Sep 1936, p. 5 Samuel Insull's legal difficulties are discussed in more detail in the section of this chapter dealing with the mainstream press.
- ¹¹⁶ *The Blackshirt*, 14 Nov 1936, p. 7.
- ¹¹⁷ *Action*, 28 Feb 1936, p.7.
- ¹¹⁸ *Action*, 28 Feb 1936, p. 6 & 12 Mar 1936, p. 10. See also p. 16 where a report of the case of three opponents of the BUF convicted of offences committed at a BUF meeting in Manchester is headlined 'JEWS ATTACK BRITONS.'
- ¹¹⁹ *Action*, 12 Mar 1936, p. 8
- ¹²⁰ *Action*, 12 Mar 1936, p. 16; 9 April 1936, p. 3.
- ¹²¹ *Action*, 28 Feb 1936, p. 9.
- ¹²² *Action*, 28 Feb 1936, p. 6; 12 Mar, pp. 4, 8 & 10; 6 Mar 1936, p. 4; 19 Mar 1936, p. 4; 2 Apr 1936, p. 7; 9 Apr 1936, p. 7. *Blackshirt* also expressed concerns over perceived Jewish control and corruption of British cinema. See, for example, 10 Oct 1936, p. 2 & 31 Oct 1936, p. 5.
- ¹²³ *Blackshirt*, 6 Mar 1936, p. 7; 4 Apr 1936, p. 6; 2 May 1936, p. 6; 9 May 1936, p. 7; 16 May 1936, p. 6; 23 May 1936, pp. 6 & 7; 30 May 1936, p. 6; 13 Jun 1936, p. 1; 4 Jul 1936, pp. 6 & 7; 11 Jul 1936, p. 6; 18 Jul 1936, pp. 6 & 7; 25 Jul 1936, p. 6 & 7.
- ¹²⁴ *Blackshirt*, 21 Nov 1936.
- ¹²⁵ *Blackshirt*, 21 Nov 1936, p.7. See also reports of speeches by Mosley and Joyce on p. 8.

-
- ¹²⁶ *Blackshirt*, 10 Oct 1936, p. 2; 17 Oct 1936, p. 8; 7 Nov 1936, p. 2 & 21 Nov 1936, p. 7.
- ¹²⁷ *Blackshirt*, 4 Jul 1936, p. 8.
- ¹²⁸ *Blackshirt*, 8 Aug 1936, p. 6.
- ¹²⁹ *Blackshirt*, 19 Dec 1936, p. 7.
- ¹³⁰ *Blackshirt*, 29 May 1937, pp. 1-2; 28 Aug 1937, p. 1; 8 Nov 1937, p. 3 & 24 Dec 1937, p. 4.
- ¹³¹ *Action*, 11 Nov 1937, p. 9.
- ¹³² *Action*, 19 Mar 1938, p. 10; 2 Apr 1938, p. 13; & 10 Dec 1932, p. 8.
- ¹³³ *Action*, 9 Apr 1938, p. 5; 23 Apr 1938, p. 5; 4 Jun 1938, p. 13 & 27 Aug 1938, p. 13.
- ¹³⁴ *Blackshirt*, Mar 1938, p. 3; & May 1938, p. 6.
- ¹³⁵ *Blackshirt*, 24 Dec 1937, p. 6.
- ¹³⁶ For details of the BUF's financial crisis see Linehan, p.110-3.
- ¹³⁷ Both these publications were owned by the 8th Duke of Northumberland in the 1920s, see Ruotsila, pp. 71-92. The *Morning Post* was amalgamated with the *Telegraph* on 1 October 1937.
- ¹³⁸ See for example the city page of the *Sunday Express*, 27 Sep 1936, p. 6; a short story in the *Express* 7 Jun 1932, p. 8; and the letters page of the *Express* 13 Jul 1932, p. 8.
- ¹³⁹ Andrew Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule* (Oxford University Press, London, 1964), pp.195-8.
- ¹⁴⁰ Kushner, 'The Impact of British Anti-semitism,' pp.202-4. Kushner's theories build on the concept of 'the antisemitism of tolerance' in which the dominant culture exerts pressure on Jews to assimilate and conform. See Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction Anti-Semitism 1700-1933* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1980), pp. 318-24. Tony Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale? British Reactions to Nazi Anti-Semitism, 1933-39' in *Immigrants and Minorities* Vol. 8 no. 1 1989, pp. 144-5 & 156; B. Williams, 'The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance' in A. Kidd & K Roberts (eds), *City, Class and Culture* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985), pp. 74-102. David Cesarani supports Kushner's interpretation and rejects Todd Endelman's argument that emancipation was not based on the assumption that Jews would relinquish their distinctiveness, see David Cesarani, 'The Study of Antisemitism in

Britain Trends: and Perspectives' in Michael Brown (ed.), *Approaches to Antisemitism: Context and Curriculum* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1994), pp. 259-63; and *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990), p. 2.

¹⁴¹ Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale?' pp. 143-5, & 150.

¹⁴² Douglas Reed, the *Times*' Berlin correspondent and a best selling author, has been described as an 'anti Nazi antisemite.' Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale?', p.151. George Ward Price was an influential journalist who wrote approvingly of Hitler and Mussolini and authored many of the articles that appeared under Lord Rothermere's by-line. Dan Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain 1933-1939* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 85, 92, 104, & 118. Dorril, pp. 146-7.

¹⁴³ For example see five articles on 'Alien London' by a *Times* special correspondent 27 Nov 1924, pp.13-4; 28 Nov 1924, pp. 15-6, 2 Dec 1924, pp. 15-6; 4 Dec 1924, 9 p. 15-6; 8 December 1924, pp. 15-6. Also an appreciation of the work done by Mr. B. Henriquez, a wealthy Jew who set up boys' clubs in the East End, *Times* 23 Nov 1937, p. 20.

¹⁴⁴ For example see *Times*, 23 Mar 1932, p. 17. *Mail*, 2 Sept 1932, p. 6.

¹⁴⁵ *Mail* 5 Oct 1932, p. 5; 10 Oct 1932, pp. 13-4.

¹⁴⁶ *Express*, 7 Jun 1932, p. 1 & 9 Jun 1932, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ *Times*, 1 Apr 1932, p. 12; 10 Jun 1932, p. 12; 5 Oct 1932, p. 13; 8 Oct 1932, p. 13; 13 Oct 1932, p. 13; & 29 Dec 1932, p.7. Later developments in the case were reported by the *Times* in a manner sympathetic to Insull, giving more emphasis to the 'human interest' aspects of the story, for example see 8 May 1934, p. 15 & 2 Nov 1934, p. 13.

¹⁴⁸ *Times*, 18 Jul 1938, p. 14

¹⁴⁹ *Fascist*, Aug 1938, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ *Express*, 22 Jun 1932, p. 3; 23 Jun 1932, p. 8. 25 Jun 1932, p. 10.

¹⁵¹ *Express*, 17 Jul 1932, p. 10.

¹⁵² *Express*, 17 Jul 1932, p. 1.

¹⁵³ *Express*, 24 Jun 1932, p. 18, 9 Jul 1932, p. 8; & 1 Oct 1932.

¹⁵⁴ *Express*, 25 Jul 1932, p. 8.

-
- ¹⁵⁵ 6 Nov 1933, pp.1 & 16; 5 Dec 1933, p. 10; 1 Jan 1934, p. 4; 4 Jan 1934, p. 17; 17 Jan 1934, p. 28; 13 Apr 1934, p. 26; 30 May 1934, p. 5; 5 Jun 1934, pp. 1 & 7; 23 Oct 1934, p. 11.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Mirror*, 19 May 1933, p.10.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Mail*, 15 Jan 1934, p. 10.
- ¹⁵⁸ Nicholas Mosley, *Rules of the Game / Beyond the Pale* (Pimlico, London, 1998), p. 310.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Mail*, 25 Jan 1934, p. 11; 8 Jan 1934, p. 19; & 12 Jun 1934, p. 10.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Mail*, 25 Jan 1934, p. 10 & 8 Jun 1934, p. 14.
- ¹⁶¹ *Mail*, 25 Jan 1934, p. 10
- ¹⁶² *Mail*, 14 Jun 1934, p. 12.
- ¹⁶³ *Mail*, 7 Jun 1934, p. 10.
- ¹⁶⁴ *Blackshirt*, 20 Jul 1934, p. 2.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Jun 1933, p. 2; 9 Jan 1933, p. 11; 11 Jan 1933, p. 2; 12 Jan 1933, p. 3; 4 Apr 1933, p. 11; 27 May 1933, p. 11; 17 Jun 1933, p. 15; 25 Jul 1933, p. 13; 12 Dec 1933, p. 13.
- ¹⁶⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 Jan 1933, p. 11; 2 Feb 1933, p. 4; 1 Apr 1933, p. 15; 2 Feb 1933, p. 4; 5 Jul 1933, p. 11.
- ¹⁶⁷ Sharf, pp.197-8.

CAUTIOUSLY DOES IT – Attitudes to German Antisemitism and Jewish Refugees¹

While the mainstream press in Britain did not share the extreme antisemitic views of the fascist press, and at times displayed a positive appreciation of ‘British’ Jews, their attitude to ‘foreign’ Jews was more equivocal. In particular the Tory popular press demonstrated an irrational fear of the effects of allowing even small numbers of refugees into the country and was very keen to distance Britain from any involvement in the relief of Jews suffering persecution in continental Europe. However, responses towards Germany and the overt expression of racial antisemitism were complex, as unambiguously critical reports could lead to correspondents being expelled from Germany, and editorial comment, although generally critical of German antisemitism in action, was tempered by the possible national and international repercussions of interfering in what was seen as another nation’s domestic affairs. This chapter seeks to explore these issues in detail and to establish if the attitudes of the British fascists and the mainstream converged, firstly in relation to the Nazis’ rise to power, secondly over the treatment of Jews by the Nazi regime and thirdly over responses to the refugees fleeing Germany and the occupied territories. In particular the chapter considers more closely the concept of liberal antisemitism and addresses the question of whether Jews were only acceptable in mainstream society if they were few in number and fully assimilated.

British responses to Jewish refugees have been hotly debated. Although they argue that more could have been done, Bernard Wasserstein and A. J. Sherman maintain that the British government's approach to Jewish refugees was comparatively generous, about 50,000 refugees were allowed entry into Britain, and Wasserstein claims that, despite some underlying antagonism, there was considerable public sympathy for the refugees.² Rubinstein, meanwhile, is adamant that Britain and the other democracies could not have saved any more Jews from the Holocaust. For Louise London, such arguments are not fully substantiated and, while she acknowledges that Britain did more to shelter the Jews than any other country, apart from the Soviet Union and the United States, she argues that Britain's generosity was limited by self-interest.³ The weight of the historiography supports the argument that the British Government, and others, could have saved more refugees than they did, but how many more could have been rescued is debateable.

While donations to the various relief funds goes some way to endorse claims of public support for the refugees, sufficient account has not been taken of the attitude of the popular press, let alone the vicious diatribes of the fascist press. Holmes argues that the British Government was always conscious of public antagonism to Jews and this reinforced its existing inclination to be cautious in admitting refugees.⁴

According to Sharf's analysis of the attitudes of the British press to Jews in Nazi Germany, the press distorted or omitted little in its coverage of the persecution of the Jews in Germany.⁵ Yet, closer examination shows that the extent of the coverage and its presentation varied considerably between the mainstream papers. The popular press reported intermittently on the violence and

repression taking place in Germany. These reports tended to be sensationalised, in comparison with those of the quality press. Papers such as the *Times* and the *Telegraph* were more objective, providing more frequent and more detailed reports of events. The *Times* provided extensive coverage, and the tone of the reports from the *Times*' Berlin Correspondents was disapproving.⁶ The quantity and tone of each paper's reports and editorials varied, and these were often influenced by the 'line' of the proprietor or editor of the paper concerned. The editor of the *Times*, Geoffrey Dawson, who was a confidante of Neville Chamberlain, generally kept the paper's editorial stance in line with government policy.⁷ In the case of the *Mail* and the *Express*, due to the bitter circulation war in which they were engaged, their primary focus was always selecting and presenting the news in a manner that would maximise their chances of outselling each other. While the tenor of its leader columns was consistent, the tone of reports and articles in the *Express* varied notably, depending on the author of a particular item, for instance, D. Sefton Delmer was less enthusiastically pro-Hitler than Pembroke Stephens. Possibly Lord Beaverbrook allowed his columnists slightly more latitude than did Lord Rothermere, who according to Dorril, used George Ward Price as his 'journalistic mouthpiece.'⁸ Close reading of Ward Price's autobiographical writing confirms Dorril's assessment of his association with Rothermere.⁹

THE QUALITY PRESS AND NAZI GERMANY: INITIAL RESPONSES

The reactions of the *Times* and the *Telegraph* to Hitler's Chancellorship and the early days of Nazi policymaking were not enthusiastic. The *Times* adopted a cautious approach and was measured in its editorial response to Hitler's first

government, noting that, given the level of popular support for Hitler, it was 'desirable' that he be offered the opportunity to show that 'he is something more than an orator and an agitator.' While the *Times* implied that there was the potential for concern, it advocated a 'wait and see' policy in the hope that Hitler would demonstrate his 'constructive powers, and his ability for the first time to exercise power with responsibility.'¹⁰ The *Telegraph* was more sanguine than the *Times*, seeing no potential threat in Hitler's leadership of the German Government. In the *Telegraph's* perception of Germany the Jewish community 'shows not the slightest apprehension at the Nazi leader's entry into office.'¹¹ For the *Telegraph*, it was very much business as usual in Germany.

Maintaining stable international relations was the most significant factor driving the quality press' response to the Nazi regime. Despite the Nazis' ruthless suppression of political opponents, a *Times* editorial, in February 1933, noted that the world was waiting sympathetically to see if Hitler's undoubted talents were sufficient to enable him to lead an effective government.¹² This was despite the almost daily reports detailing the suppression of political opponents.¹³ Eventually, editorials began to reflect the alarming reports filed by the *Times'* German correspondents, and by March 1933 criticism of the conduct of the elections, the use of violence and persecution, and, significantly, fear of the potential threat to international peace were voiced.¹⁴ However, the degree of editorial concern quickly diminished and, before the month was out, readers were told that Hitler's foreign policy was not immoderate and internal excesses should not prevent an international accord, manifestly demonstrating that the Nazi regime's persecution of its citizens was seen as being of little relevance outside Germany.¹⁵ The paper's correspondents continued to file reports that described events in Germany

accurately and, while phrased in neutral tones, they conveyed a clear sense of distaste and disgust at the actions of the Nazi regime. As well as particular incidents involving specific individuals, the *Times* also reported on ongoing issues such as the suppression of dissent in the churches, the Reichstag fire and subsequent trial, the use of concentration camps, and the increasing levels of hardship and persecution faced by German Jews.¹⁶

The *Telegraph* also began to demonstrate concern over the treatment of Jews in Germany. In April 1933 an ‘opinion’ piece by one of the paper’s correspondents was published in the news columns instead of the usual factual report. The correspondent argued that the Jews had been a great asset to Germany: ‘Not only in business, but in medicine, literature, the Press, art, music and the drama, they are everywhere prominent and in the front rank.’¹⁷ In an editorial on the same day the *Telegraph* refuted claims by German journalists that reports of ‘alleged atrocities’ were ‘false rumours’ that created a ‘distorted view of the great events in Germany.’¹⁸ The editorial insisted that ‘the reports of brutal attacks by “Nazi” troopers on their political enemies have been too well authenticated by experienced newspaper correspondents and confirmed from private sources to be ignored.’ The persecution of the Jews in Germany was judged ‘quite inexcusable in a civilised country.’¹⁹ A couple of days later the *Telegraph*’s reaction to the anti-Jewish boycott is equally straightforward,

... it certainly was not a victory of Reason or Judgement...Saturday’s proceedings were not at all grand or heroic in character—and the Nazis really seem to aim at the heroic—but were, in fact, contemptibly sordid and mean.²⁰

The response of the *Times* to the boycott was in a more restrained and less censorious tone. Its editorial pointed out some potential risks to Germany of the strategy its new leaders had adopted, and supported Lord Halifax’s statement in

the House of Lords that there could be no intervention in internal German affairs. Although convinced that British intervention could only be counter-productive, the *Times* stressed the widespread concern felt in Britain at recent developments in Germany.²¹

At this time the *Times* and the *Telegraph* did not consider the persecution of German citizens as anything other than a domestic issue, which would not impede Anglo-German relations. Yet, both papers expressed clearly that the actions of the Nazis were morally repugnant and politically inadvisable.

THE RESPONSE OF THE POPULAR PRESS TO HITLER'S RISE TO POWER

The approval of the Tory popular papers for Hitler and the Nazi regime was largely due to the perception that Hitler shared their concerns regarding the dangers of communism. The *Mail* had expressed its approval of Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) as early as September 1930, when, following significant electoral gains by the NSDAP, an article lauding their success and calling for a similar youth-centric party to be established in Britain was published under Rothermere's byline, although the article was actually written by Ward Price.²² The article also accepted Nazi propaganda that Jews had been over-represented in public office.

Unlike the *Mail*, the *Express* had always claimed to be even-handed. While stating that it 'unequivocally condemned persecution of the Jews' it boasted that it offered a greater freedom than other newspapers for the discussion of both sides of any political issue. While disassociating itself from the views expressed, in 1932 the *Express* had published a 'startling attack on the Jews by Dr. Joseph

Goebbels.²³ A couple of days later A. L. Easterman, an *Express* correspondent, was given an equivalent amount of space and prominence in order to answer Goebbels' allegations.²⁴ It is probable that when it published Goebbels' article the *Express* was more concerned with a potential rise in circulation than with any interest in furthering debate.

After 21 days of Hitler's Chancellorship, *Express* columnist D. Sefton Delmer assessed the changes in Germany. He noted the increase in militarism and the talk of war, commented on Hitler's shrewdness in outmanoeuvring von Papen, Dr. Hugenberg and Hindenburg, observed that few people were now willing to talk candidly over the telephone, yet made no mention of any overt persecution.²⁵ This was quickly followed by an account of Delmer's flight to Frankfurt accompanying Hitler who was to give a speech as part of his election campaign. Hitler is referred to as 'the saviour of Germany', but later described as looking 'like ... a provincial commercial traveller.'²⁶

Despite the lack of editorial comment, the *Mail* and the *Express* did include reports from Germany in their foreign news, and both initially concentrated on anti-communist activity, an issue they took very seriously. The *Express* appeared to approve Hitler's 'Plans To Save Germany', which included 'DRASTIC ACTION AGAINST REDS.'²⁷ This was, apparently, justified due to the 'RED WAVE OF TERROR', which had been unleashed in Germany on Moscow's orders. The 'wave of terror' was the shooting, allegedly by communists, of a police constable and a Hitlerite after the Nazis' triumphal march on 30 January 1933.²⁸ The *Express* gave this event more coverage than other papers, reflecting its deep anxiety over communism.

The persecution of the Jews was occasionally reported; instances included the expulsion of Jewish doctors from hospitals, the banning of concerts with Jewish conductors, and the prohibition of Jewish lawyers and Judges from entering the law courts.²⁹ The *Express* had suggested that if Hitler were to end ‘Jew Baiting’ then the German boycott would also end, but it adopted a more forceful tone in its support for Hitler’s anti-communist stance.³⁰ This, coupled with its willingness to downplay the persecution of the Jews, is exemplified in an editorial of April 1933:

The most popular cry of the moment is “Down with Hitler!” The Jews quite rightly cry it louder than any one else. But they are supported back in France and Britain by influential, sober-minded people who would declare Germany a plague spot until she changed her Government. Do they know what they are talking about? The “Daily Express” abhors the persecution of the Jews as it detests all forms of government that are based on violence – but what is Hitler doing? He is carrying into actual realisation Bismarck’s dream of a unified Germany. He is crushing a Communistic movement that was not only threatening to disrupt Germany, but was threatening to form a colossal Bolshevik combination with Russia. Hitler and his Nazis may prove to be the enemies of Germany and civilisation. There is much about their movement that is revolting to British susceptibilities. But if German Communism had seized control of the Reich, many of the people in this country who are shouting for his downfall would have been shouting far louder “Send for Hitler!”³¹

So as long as the persecution included communists, the *Express* considered that much could be forgiven.

More often than not the *Express* presented Hitler in a favourable light. Their Special Women’s Correspondent, musing on the question ‘will Hitler ever marry?’ reflected on his ‘passionate speeches’ and his ability to ‘move an audience and make them vibrate to his voice and gesture.’³² On Hitler’s forty-fourth birthday an article appeared reporting the celebrations, which included money and food for the poor and holidays for children. In his ‘Talk of London’ column ‘the Dragoman’ referred to Hitler as ‘Handsome.’³³

While not endorsing the persecution of Jews, the *Express* appeared keen to justify Hitler's actions. In May 1933 the paper ran an article by Gilbert Frankau headed 'As a Jew I am not against Hitler.' Frankau was a poet and novelist who had been discouraged by his parents from identifying with anything Jewish.³⁴ Frankau claimed that the protest against Hitler was 'being somewhat overdone.' While he predicted that the persecution would eventually prove to be against Germany's interests, Frankau claimed that it was understandable because: 'The Communist movement in Germany has been largely fomented by Jews.' He explained that German Jews were not as integrated as those in Britain, and, while many were good Jews, there were those, presumably 'bad' Jews, who 'would rather see Germany fall than Jewry.' Frankau went on to say that if only 'Hitler's jack-boot was a little less broad in the toe it might kick out the latter without injuring the former.'³⁵

If the *Express* was usually clear in its approval or disapproval of the various developments in Nazi Germany, occasionally the tone could be more ambiguous. In an article by Pembroke Stephens celebrating Hitler's first year in office his achievements were listed: the reduction of unemployment, the stabilisation of farming, the smashing of communism, trade unions and political clericalism, and, finally, the restoration of order. Conversely, Stephens also described some of the less attractive aspects of Hitler's Germany, for example a shop girl sent to a concentration camp for refusing to contribute sixpence to the winter help fund. The destruction of Berlin's cultural and intellectual brilliance was mourned, despite the concurrent improvement in public morality. Overall, Stephens concluded that the majority of people were less happy, had less money and fewer rights than previously, but Stephens expressed no sense of outrage or anger at

what was so obviously wrong in German perceptions of *Volksgemeinschaft*. Instead the tone of the article is more that of a bemused outsider observing a failing experiment; an experiment that the reader is encouraged to think worth trying, one that really should have worked:

Make full allowance for the Nazis. Admit that the Jews abused their position in democratic Germany and deserved their fate. Admit that the Socialists were corrupt and weak. Admit that the Treaty of Versailles imposed the tortuous sufferings and terrible confusion on Germany, and that a scourge to lash the demoralised country into unity was the logical outcome of too much pressure from abroad.

Yet the picture that National Socialism presents to the world on its first birthday lacks charm. The failure of the Nazis to impress the western world with their record is not the fault of Hitler, for whom I personally have the greatest admiration and respect. The fault lies in the defects in the German character...The average German is docile and cool, obedient and haughty, sentimental and crude, with a genius for organisation, militarism and self-praise. The complex of these emotions is responsible for the cruelty and lack of humour in the Nazi movement which, with less rigid application, might have set a pattern of great beauty to a grey world.³⁶

The Tory popular press, exploiting the novelty value of Hitler and the Nazi regime, treated the Nazi elite as celebrities and Stephens appeared enchanted by the social activities of some young and dashing Nazi leaders who were enjoying Berlin 'society', particularly the company of wealthy and beautiful women. Stephens fancifully described the 'youthful and rather exotic looking' President of Cologne, Dr Diels, and the 'Darling of the Diplomats,' Herr Schultz, who was attached to Roehm's staff and was the 'best-looking Nazi diplomat.' Stephens assured readers that the 'good type of Nazi is a jolly fellow who believes wholeheartedly in enjoyment.'³⁷

Surprisingly, despite Rothermere's evident enthusiasm for Hitler and his belief that the youth of Germany had set an example in revitalising their nation that government that Britain should emulate, the *Mail* generally exhibited less

enthusiasm for Hitler than the *Express*.³⁸ In August 1934 a review of 'Hitler's Amazing Career', by Douglas West, listed the facts without any sycophantic gloss.³⁹ However, when the *Mail* did articulate its admiration for Hitler it did it unequivocally and the accompanying editorial described Hitler as a clear-sighted leader, comparing him favourably to Napoleon.⁴⁰ Headlines on the following page proclaimed Hitler the most powerful figure in world history.⁴¹ A matter of days later the *Mail* published an exclusive interview between Hitler and G. Ward Price. As well as giving readers Hitler's views on Germany's peaceful intentions, world economic conditions, and the League of Nations, Ward Price also informed them of the clearness of Hitler's skin, his well-groomed appearance and immaculate dress. Having, briefly, raised the spectre of division in the Nazis' ranks he retreated into the realms of the romantic novelist when he told readers that 'The Leader's eyes flashed as he replied.'⁴² In a more restrained tone the following day's editorial described Hitler as 'the most prominent and most discussed man of our time ...'⁴³

The results of the plebiscite in August 1934, in which 84.6 per cent of German voters endorsed Hitler's combination of the roles of Chancellor and Reich President following Hindenburg's death, were also hailed by the *Mail* as 'an astonishing tribute to the personal prestige of Herr Hitler.' Although acknowledging that:

moral suasion was undoubtedly applied to the "critics and doubters" no pressure could force a whole nation, against its will, to give such impressive proof of its confidence.⁴⁴

If the majority was content for the minorities to be suppressed and coerced there was nothing for the *Mail*'s readers to be concerned about. The *Express* took a

slightly different line in its editorial, declaring that 'Hitler's vote slumps, though he is still master of the hearts and fears of the majority of his countrymen.'⁴⁵

It is significant that the *Mail* had published positive appreciations of Hitler in August 1934 as in September Otto von Bismarck, grandson of the Iron Chancellor and Counsellor at the German embassy in London, reported to Berlin that due to the BUF's increasing popularity the British Government had decided to fight fascism and the press had agreed to support this, hence, according to Bismarck, the press attacks on Germany during the previous few months.⁴⁶ The *Mail* was definitely out of step with the alleged pact with the Government, and the *Express* was hardly in fighting mood.

In contrast to the Tory popular press, the *Mirror*'s approach was much less flattering, for example an editorial published a couple of weeks before the plebiscite read:

After the old Junker ... comes the hysterical Austrian, with his megalomania, based on an acute inferiority complex, his neurasthenia, his oratorical brilliance, his inexperience in the government of a great people.'⁴⁷

Readers were advised to observe over the next few months how much substance there was behind the 'passionate gestures' and the 'flaming words.' Three days later, referring to the interview in the *Mail*, readers were also warned not to rely on Hitler's words when he spoke of his peaceful intentions towards Britain. They were reminded that the Kaiser once spoke in similar terms.⁴⁸

MAINSTREAM RESPONSES TO THE PURGE OF THE SA

The reaction of the British press to Hitler's 'Night of the Long Knives' showed little sign of the antagonism reported by Bismarck. The *Telegraph* referred to Hitler as showing 'the daring of a born leader of men.'⁴⁹ Other Tory papers were

equally congratulatory. However, the *Times*' editorial was, once again, less fulsome relating the progression of events and commenting that:

HERR HITLER, whatever one may think of his methods, is genuinely trying to transform revolutionary fervour into moderate and constructive effort and to impose a high standard of public service on National-Socialist officials.⁵⁰

This, while less enthusiastic than the *Telegraph* and the Tory popular press, could not be construed as an attack on Germany.

It may well have been the liberal or left-wing press that Bismarck had in mind when he made his report to Berlin. The *Manchester Guardian* did print items that repeated allegations of brutality or were critical of press freedom in Germany, and also reported the speeches of British public figures who were critical of the Nazi regime.⁵¹ The paper's editorial response to the 'Night of the Long Knives' cast doubt on aspects of the official version of events but accepted there was a counter-revolution and that Hitler had acted with ruthless speed to secure his position.⁵² On the same page, however, a correspondent questioned the existence of a counter-revolution and suggested that Hitler's government might soon be replaced by a Junker regime that included Göring.⁵³ Similarly, the *Mirror*'s editorial, while acknowledging the success of Hitler's 'iron hand', also thought the Junker class represented a potential threat that might force Hitler to compromise.⁵⁴ The following day's editorial accepted that Hindenburg's support had made Hitler's position secure, but reflected on the probability that in order to conceal internal dissension Germany might well turn her attention 'upon the "enemies of Germany" across her frontiers.'⁵⁵

The coverage in the mainstream press hardly constituted a concerted attack on Germany, but Bismarck's perception of widespread and unfounded criticism of the Nazi regime highlights the Nazis' sensitivity to any criticism. This feeling of

ill-usage did not diminish and, as we shall see in a later chapter, Hitler continued to complain of unjust criticism and anti-Nazi bias throughout the decade. This was a reading of mainstream reporting of events in Germany that was shared by British fascists.

THE FASCIST PRESS AND NAZI GERMANY

Unsurprisingly, the fascist press did not report examples of persecution in Germany, but did, occasionally, refer to such reports in the mainstream press, claiming that they were lies or exaggerations disseminated by a Jewish-controlled press and designed to discredit Germany. For example, in April 1933 the *Blackshirt* claimed that the German government did not discriminate against Jews, that the Jewish issue was not relevant to fascism, and that stories in the national press were ‘lying propaganda.’ It was also explained that, in Germany, Jews were allied with the two main enemies of fascism. At one extreme they were associated with Communism and at the other with ‘International Finance.’⁵⁶ The *Blackshirt* was contemptuous of the mainstream press’ reporting of events in Germany and the papers’ analysis of events.⁵⁷ In a similar vein Arthur Kitson argued that the British press was anti-German because Hitler had acted to save Germany from the political hatred of the Jews.⁵⁸ According to *Action* the coverage of events in Germany by the mainstream press was ‘distinguished by its venom and mendacity.’⁵⁹

A letter, published in the *Blackshirt*, from a ‘Jewish Correspondent in Prague’ explained that ‘good’, patriotic Jews had nothing to fear from the Nazis, despite some beatings, deaths and so forth. It was admitted that two Jews had been kidnapped and had not been seen since, ‘but they were Communists and that

was the reason for their disappearance.’⁶⁰ As in the Tory popular press, it appeared that the persecution of communists was viewed as legitimate.

The fascist press made every effort to depict the Nazi regime in a positive light. Mosley described Hitler as the ‘New Man of Germany’, and claimed that the Nazi movement had shown what could be done by the will to action and to power.⁶¹ The BUF applauded the Nazis’ use of a strong hand in maintaining power, but expected the Nazi government to repress revenge attacks and other outrages.⁶² During May 1933, the *Blackshirt* introduced a regular column called ‘The New Germany’; in each issue it portrayed a different aspect of the Nazi regime in a positive manner.⁶³ In July an article by Alexander Raven introduced readers to the ‘Human Side of Hitlerism.’ This included a visit to a concentration camp for political prisoners, where even ‘one of the heftiest and most violent’ of communists was allowed parole because he had a large family, and featured a parade of former Boy Scouts who had been absorbed into the Hitler Youth.⁶⁴

Action continued to deny that the Jews were suffering persecution because of their race and claimed there was a conspiracy to prevent England and Germany establishing friendly relations. The article went on to insist that Jews had not been subject to a ‘savage and unjustifiable persecution.’ Instead ‘the Jew’ had been given the

freedom to enjoy his own culture and to indulge in his own cultural activities, in place of superimposing them on the German people, whether they wanted them or not.’⁶⁵

Comments like these accentuated the perception that the Jews in Germany were significantly different to the majority of the population and were, therefore, manifestly not German.

The IFL also approved of Hitler's show of strength, and in the *Fascist* Hitler's Chancellorship was celebrated with a short, front-page article by H. R. Hoffman, a German National Socialist. Hoffman welcomed 'Hitler's strong government' which he claimed was protecting Germany from Bolshevism and Marxism, and enabling the 'rebirth of the Nordic ideal.'⁶⁶ The following month the *Fascist* advised new readers that

owing to Hitler's determination to destroy for ever the evil influence of the Jew on the people of Germany, all the Jewish world power is concentrated against him; consequently the "Britis(c)h" [*sic*] newspapers, with their Jewish correspondents and Jewish news-agencies, are full of lies and misrepresentations not only about Hitler but about what is going on in Germany.'⁶⁷

Another article by Hoffman explained, without admitting the nature of events, that 'the present happenings in Germany' were due to the increasing influence of Jews in German society, their links with communism, and the German people's eventual realisation that

a national rebirth and a racial renewal could only become possible when the Jews were assigned a position in the New Germany which was in proportion to their percentage of the population.⁶⁸

Again without specifying any details, the *Fascist* claimed in June 1934 that '...Germany has won a victory against the Jew, and consequently we British are to be used by the Jew Money Power to smash her if it can be done.'⁶⁹ A later issue of the *Fascist* accused the Jews of calumny, hatred and falsehood, claiming that they had manipulated international responses to the 'efforts of the German Nation to emancipate itself completely from the Jews.'⁷⁰ Its views on Jewish control of the press were also reiterated when, in December 1934, the *Fascist* claimed that:

the anti-German attitude of the so called "British" daily newspapers, together with their hints about Britain being drawn into the trouble, is Jewish in its origin.⁷¹

The *Fascist* did not state which papers were hinting that Britain might become embroiled in conflict with Germany, but no such hints are to be found in the pages of the Tory press. Indeed the *Mail* and *Express* were strident in their demands that Britain should not become involved in any continental conflict.

The responses of the fascist press to Hitler's Government are similar in their welcome and enthusiasm for the changes being introduced in Germany. There is also a superficial similarity in their avoidance of any description of the persecutions in Germany and their insistence that reports in the mainstream press of those persecutions were misleading and malicious. Yet, there were significant differences in the tone and style of the articles relating to the treatment of Jews in Germany, reflecting the target readership of the various publications. *Action*, as we have seen, portrayed the persecution as an opportunity for Jews to enjoy cultural freedom and independence without impinging on the 'German people', thus reinforcing the supposed alien nature of the Jews while downplaying their persecution. The *Blackshirt* gamely persisted with the contradictory line that the 'Jewish issue' was irrelevant while maintaining that the Nazi Government needed to take robust action against 'Jewish' socialism and finance to consolidate its own position and protect Germany's interests. The *Fascist*, while insisting that the reports of persecution were fabricated as part of a Jewish conspiracy, celebrated Hitler's intention to excise the Jews from German public life. The popular press shared some of the enthusiasm for Hitler demonstrated by the fascist press, celebrating in particular his image as a strong leader bringing order and stability to Germany, however, they also treated him as a celebrity as well as a serious political leader. All of the mainstream papers were critical of the persecutions of

the Jews, although the popular press shared the fascists' approval of the repression of communism.

THE MAINSTREAM PRESS AND JEWISH REFUGEES

London argues that in the face of the suffering of the Jewish refugees Britain opted for caution, pragmatism, and the national interest.⁷² This was certainly the position advocated by the majority of the Tory press, but the manner in which the various papers articulated their concerns regarding admittance of refugees to Britain varied considerably. Stridency was the overwhelming characteristic of the editorials addressing the subject of refugees in both the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mail*. Both viewed the refugees as a threat to Britain's interests and expressed their views forcibly. The *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* were more moderate in tone and appeared more sincere in their expressions of concern for the plight of the refugees, though they too were adamant that Britain alone could do little to alleviate the suffering. Britain was no longer a country of immigration and the Aliens Act of 1905 had been introduced to halt the flow of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe. Further legislation in 1914 and 1919 added extra restrictions.⁷³ Most of the refugees fleeing Nazi persecution were granted only temporary leave to remain and were en route to other countries that offered a permanent home. The Jewish Community in Britain raised funds to underwrite the cost of maintaining Jewish refugees during their stay in Britain and the leaders of Anglo-Jewry had promised the Government that the cost of providing for the refugees would not fall on the British tax-payer. Both the Government and the Anglo-Jewish hierarchy were concerned that admitting large numbers of refugees

might stimulate antisemitism and this was a significant factor in limiting the numbers allowed entry.⁷⁴

Fears regarding an alien 'invasion' pre-dated the growth of fascism; specific concerns regarding Jewish refugees had been circulating 'since the beginning of the influx in 1881.'⁷⁵ In 1924 the *Times* ran a series of articles under the heading 'Alien London', which reported the effects of the 'alien invasion.'⁷⁶ These appear to fit well with Kushner's definition of 'liberal antisemitism.' An editorial commenting on the 'Alien London' series declared that

No nation welcomes the settlement within its borders of an alien population, living its own separate life and preserving its own characteristics from generation to generation. No nation can desire that such a population should share in the political system of the country.⁷⁷

Established Jews were not seen as a problem, but there was concern that more recent, first generation immigrants should assimilate, though they were not expected to give up their religious practices. The descendents of these immigrants would be an asset to the nation, but the process of amalgamation would take patience and time and it must not be made more difficult by 'throwing open the gates to a flood of fresh immigrants ...'⁷⁸

The issues discussed in this series of articles would be raised again in the late 1930s as the refugee crisis deepened. The use of terms such as 'Swarms', 'Foreign invasion', 'invaders' and 'The invaded British' to refer to the arrival of refugees would resurface in the fascist press, as would the allegations relating to hygiene, disease, internationalism, fraudulent behaviour and the stealing of British jobs. Gradually the use of terms that implied disease or militant occupancy decreased in the mainstream press. They were replaced by others which, while still emotive, were marginally less threatening.⁷⁹

During the early 1930s the mainstream press was not greatly concerned with refugees, and in 1932 the *Express* reassured its readers that there were only a small number of Jews in Britain.⁸⁰ The arrival, in 1933, of refugees from Germany attracted the interest of the *Express*, however, and its description of two Jewish refugees as ‘the first of 60,000’ clearly suggested the imminent arrival of all 60,000 in Britain.⁸¹ The following month it was alleged that there were aliens on the dole, competing with Britons for jobs.⁸² The accusation that refugees represented economic competition to unemployed British workers was particularly potent given the context of the depression and high levels of unemployment. Despite the fears of the *Express*, by December of that year only 3,000 refugees had arrived according to the Permanent Commission for Refugees, and by April 1934 there were only 2,000 remaining in England, as many had moved on to other destinations. The Commission reported that far from being a burden to the countries that had given them refuge, the new arrivals were contributing to the economy and in some cases providing employment in new businesses and industries.⁸³

The *Times* was quick to assert the benefits that refugees brought with them, particularly in the advancement of learning, as an editorial in 1933 made clear.⁸⁴ The paper continued to stress that refugees did not represent a threat to Britain’s interests. Indeed an article by Lord Rutherford on the work of the Academic Assistance Committee praised the achievements of the academic refugees based in Britain, and stressed that the money spent in aiding the refugees to establish themselves outside of Germany was raised for that specific purpose and did not disadvantage British academics, but this had meant that the council had not been able to help all those in need.⁸⁵ The *Telegraph* also emphasised that

the support given to academic refugees did not injure British lecturers and students.⁸⁶

In 1938 and 1939 events in Europe propelled the issue of the alleged danger to Britain represented by refugees up the mainstream agenda. The mainstream press expressed increased editorial concern for the fate of those fleeing Nazi persecution, but their primary concern was the implications of the refugee crisis for Britain. The mainstream papers no longer referred to the arrival of refugees as an invasion, instead they used terms such as influx or flood. This made the arrival of refugees seem less like an act of aggression and more like a natural disaster. The change of tone was subtle, and, while it suggests that the mainstream press viewed the refugees as victims who were not responsible for their plight, it did not mean that they were any more welcome.

The quality press and refugees in the late 1930s

Following the *Anschluss* the *Telegraph* stressed the importance of not opening the door to all immigrants.⁸⁷ The *Times* expressed sympathy for those Austrians who were victims of Nazi persecution, but it too supported the policy of restricting entry to Britain. Still, it had qualms regarding the reduction of traditional British hospitality to those seeking asylum. Refugees, the *Times* claimed, had enriched English life and the regulations should be 'interpreted with wide liberality.'⁸⁸ Following Government policy with regard to the refugees the *Times* urged international cooperation to solve the refugee crisis.⁸⁹

The events of *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, and the increased persecution that followed, were reported in detail by the British press. The most complete reports were published by the *Times*, which described *Kristallnacht* as a

‘Black Day for Germany’ and concluded that international opinion would have no influence in Germany.⁹⁰ A few days later this point was repeated and developed in a *Times* editorial that argued that words of condemnation were insufficient, and demanded ‘deeds not words.’ The intensification of the persecution led to expectations of an increase in the number of refugees. The intention of the Government to encourage the settlement of refugees in the colonies and dominions was welcomed by both the *Telegraph* and the *Times*, which recommended speedy and large scale action.⁹¹ It had been suggested by Sir John Hope Simpson, who had been vice-president of the Refugee Settlement Commission from 1926-30, that vast areas of the Dominions and Colonies could be developed and populated by refugees.⁹² There was significant support in Parliament and the press for this course of action, although there were difficulties to overcome as settlement in the Dominions would require the agreement of their governments and care would need to be taken in selecting suitable areas within the Colonies.⁹³

Despite the public expressions of revulsion evoked by *Kristallnacht* Tony Kushner notes that surveys carried out by Mass Observation in early 1939 show that the event soon faded from people’s minds.⁹⁴ Certainly it is in the nature of newspapers that they constantly move on to the next story, and as the intensity of the persecutions in Germany waxed and waned so the newspapers’ interest, and consequently the extent of the coverage the public were exposed to, rose and fell.

The *Times* continued to urge the need for international cooperation to alleviate the distress of the refugees, and in an editorial in January 1939 lists some of the options that were being considered following the 1938 Evian Conference.⁹⁵ Perhaps realising how little that was helpful to the refugees would actually be

produced by the Conference, the *Times* urged the Government to proceed quickly with its plans for the resettlement of large numbers of refugees in the colonies and stressed that 'these possibilities elsewhere cannot excuse any failure in prompt action of the British Government.'⁹⁶

In marked contrast to the fascist press, the *Times* was unstinting in its praise for the work of the relief funds, regularly urging support for Lord Baldwin's Refugee Fund and occasionally for smaller appeals, for example the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, which was aiding scholars and scientists.⁹⁷ A letter, from Wilfred Greene, A. F. Pollard *et al*, appealing for help for a 'small but particularly sad group' of academics was also published in February.⁹⁸ The *Times* does not record the level of response to this appeal on behalf of historians. The *Telegraph* also gave editorial support to Lord Baldwin's appeal, and argued that refugees 'are apt ... to be of substantial benefit to the country which harbours them. But there is no one land which can absorb this new migration ...'⁹⁹

Among the Tory press, the *Times* was the most active in calling for action to resolve the refugees' plight. There were frequent editorials supporting Government policy on refugees, but all contained pressing reminders of the need to act more swiftly.¹⁰⁰ The *Times* particularly approved the increasing rate at which refugees were being admitted to Britain. Noting that there were currently 40,000 refugees in Britain which 'certainly lessens, though it hardly erases, the reproach that we have done less than other countries.'¹⁰¹ Despite the progress made, more needed to be done and it was suggested that, given Keynes' prediction that lack of labour not unemployment was likely to be the major problem for Britain in the near future, more refugees should be allowed to remain

permanently. Making the need for urgency even clearer, an editorial in August quoted Sir John Hope Simpson's survey of the refugee crisis, agreeing that 'continued adherence to the principle of dealing with refugees case by case means that a "victim" may be in a concentration camp or in "his grave" before his turn comes.' The solution advocated was an extension of the block visa system and more camps such as the one in Richborough, or those in Holland and Belgium.¹⁰²

The *Telegraph* did not pay as much attention to the refugee crisis as did the *Times*. There were, however, reports of persecution from its German correspondents, and the stories of refugees who had been smuggled into Britain.¹⁰³ Editorial comment on Sir John Hope Simpson's report dismissed the possibilities of keeping more refugees in Britain and urged international cooperation and 'larger schemes of settlement.'¹⁰⁴ The *Telegraph* supported the Government's caution in handling the refugee crisis, and its refusal to allow indiscriminate admission. The need for something to be done was acknowledged, but there was no sense of urgency and the inability of Britain to accommodate significant numbers of refugees was stressed. Readers were reminded that 'charity begins at home.'¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately for many that is where it stayed.

Attitudes of the popular press to refugees in the late 1930s

The leader columns of the popular press could be distinctly unsympathetic towards the refugees, though on occasion they also offered perfunctory words of sympathy. A *Mail* editorial in March 1938, while expressing 'compassion' at the 'sad plight' of the Austrian refugees, insisted that Britain's first duty was to herself: 'Such an influx of aliens would compete seriously with our own people in the labour market.' Readers were encouraged to suppress any generous instincts

as ‘the floodgates would be opened and we should be inundated by thousands seeking a home.’¹⁰⁶ An *Express* editorial, after paying lip-service to ‘some sad stories of the persecuted Jews’ moved swiftly on to raise the possibility that Britain might ‘admit all Jewish refugees without question or discrimination’, which was judged to be undesirable as it might stir up antisemitic feeling.¹⁰⁷ This was a crude attempt to manipulate public opinion, as there had been no suggestion that Britain alone should provide shelter for all refugees. A couple of weeks later the *Express*, referring to the plight of refugees from Austria and Germany allowed that the ‘problem excites the pity of all humane folk ...’ but people in the distressed areas of Britain were also suffering, and the ‘dole queues are still longer than those formed up at Europe’s frontiers.’¹⁰⁸ Despite publishing reports on the persecutions, the *Express* limited its editorial comment to offering the sympathy of the public and a plea for tolerance.¹⁰⁹ It continued to regard the persecutions as a ‘domestic issue.’¹¹⁰ Unlike the other mainstream papers the *Express* was critical of any Government sympathy towards the refugees, complaining that ‘[t]he Jews are always in the news.’ The need for parliament to discuss the issue of refugees was questioned, as Britain had ‘already accepted our full quota of foreign Jews. We cannot assimilate any more.’¹¹¹

During 1939 the *Express*’ editorials attempted to appear sympathetic to those forced to flee the Nazi regime, but disapproved of any who made it safely to the tender mercies of British hospitality. Reports from correspondents who witnessed the persecution and the hardships suffered by the refugees were generally more sympathetic than London based columnists and editors. Alongside a sympathetic account of the wedding, in Berlin, of two young German Jews who were embarking for Shanghai and an unknown future the next day, the *Express*

published an article, by Horace Thorogood, claiming that St John's Wood was swamped by refugees. Thorogood seemed annoyed that the refugees were not poorly dressed and that they could afford to live in flats in 'our Wood.'¹¹² It appears as if starting to make a successful life in Britain somehow undermined their need for asylum. At first sight, the *Express* gave the impression that it took a similarly resentful tone with a headline of 'Wandering Jews aboard ship danced, dressed for dinner' but the report of the refugees' journey is, surprisingly, more focused on the human interest of the refugees' story and does not show any hostility to the 275 out of 907 passengers who were to be allowed to leave the cruise liner and travel to Britain (the remaining refugees went to France, Belgium and Holland).¹¹³ Following the arrival of the 275 in Britain the *Express* printed a self-congratulatory and, given the antagonistic attitude of the paper towards refugees, hypocritical editorial that proclaimed Britain the 'last resort of the Jews' and bragged that Jews were treated better in Britain than anywhere else in the world. The claim that 'prejudice has no dwelling among us', suggests that the leader writer was not as familiar with his paper's content as he should have been. Having established the inherent virtue of the entire British nation, for which no praise was required as the British could not alter their nature, the Jews were advised, in their own best interests, to encourage, sustain, support and exalt Britain 'in every case and in every circumstance.'¹¹⁴ While the *Express* did not explicitly insist that the refugees assimilate speedily, it was implicit that they should conform to British values and culture to avoid encouraging antisemitism.

The *Mirror* shared the view that charity to refugees was a virtue Britain could not afford:

The exile from plague stricken lands is an encumbrance – alas! We have to say: "there is no room for you."¹¹⁵

Its editorial comment, while reluctant to encourage settlement in Britain as letting even fifty Austrian refugee doctors practise in Britain would be detrimental to British doctors, was happy to suggest that a role should be found for them, and others, in the Commonwealth.¹¹⁶ News columns carried headlines such as BRITAIN BECOMES DUMP FOR THE NAZI EXILES' and editorial comment claimed that the Nazis were dumping the Jews, 'destitute, on others.'¹¹⁷ There was also less focus on the persecution of the Jews and the fate of the refugees than in other mainstream papers as during 1938 the *Mirror* concentrated on Spanish and Chinese refugees.¹¹⁸ The *Mirror* noted the continuation of the Jewish pogrom and, metaphorically wringing its hands, asked 'How estimate [*sic*] the immense suffering that this tragic race is enduring?' There was no answer, and no comment on what should or should not be done was made, for the persecution of the Jews 'is but a part of the sum total of unnecessary human misery. In China and in Spain the horror of power politics proceeds unabated.'¹¹⁹ The reader was left with the vague hope that right would prevail. 'Cassandra', however was more forceful and specific in his criticism of the 'Nazi chiefs' he held responsible for Germany's shame, though he exonerated the majority of the German people of culpability for 'these outbursts of vindictive savagery' and 'appalling bestiality.'¹²⁰

Uncharacteristically, the *Mail* was appalled by the crushing penalties imposed on the Jews following the murder, in Paris, of Herr vom Rath, a young German diplomat.¹²¹ Although it had repeatedly and vehemently opposed any refugees being admitted to Britain, as the international situation worsened the *Mail* appeared to moderate its stance and there was a more sombre tone to an editorial that highlighted the relentless nature of the Nazi persecution of the Jews and acknowledged that this would only intensify. That the fate of the refugees

must be addressed was stressed, as was the need for an international solution given that it was not a task Britain could undertake alone. Surprisingly, there was no opposition to an expected announcement from the Government introducing 'practical measures' on the refugees' behalf.¹²² The following day's editorial supported the Government's stance on refugees, including a willingness to 'give homes to "very large numbers" of Jewish children' and to accommodate many more adults if they were later to settle in 'other parts of the world.' The need for other countries to do their part was also reiterated.¹²³ However, concern at the number of refugees in Britain continued to be expressed.¹²⁴

An article by Graham Stanford in the *Mail* addressed questions regarding the refugees in Britain, including the cost to the British taxpayer and the threat to British jobs. He reassured readers that most of the 22,000 refugees who had been admitted to Britain were there temporarily and 5,000 had already left. Stanford stressed that the Home Office would not allow entry to anyone who might take a job that could be done by a British subject, though those that were willing to be retrained for jobs available outside Britain were allowed temporary refuge, provided the cost of their training and maintenance was met by friends, relatives or the relief funds. He also pointed out that two hundred refugees had set up factories employing 15,000 British workpeople.¹²⁵

Stanford's point of view was not shared by the *Mail*'s sub editors, who, in May 1939, were responsible for the rare re-emergence of terminology more frequently used in the fascist press when a *Mail* report of protests by acrobats, pianists and comedians at the number of foreign entertainers given permits to work in Britain was headlined 'ALIENS INVADE VARIETY.'¹²⁶ The same week readers were informed that: 'Undesirable aliens no longer find it easy to

smuggle themselves into this country.’¹²⁷ Yet, in June 1939 the *Mail* told its readers that refugees were ‘pouring into Britain at the rate of 1,000 a week.’ The report also mentions that the 30,000 refugees in Britain were not a burden to the tax-payer, but pointed out that the ability of private individuals and charitable organisations to meet the expense could not continue indefinitely, particularly as there were ‘4,000,000 potential refugees in Germany and Czechoslovakia.’¹²⁸ Again the implication was that they would all descend on Britain.

There was, then, a distinct difference between the quality and popular presses in their attitudes towards refugees. The quality press was more welcoming to refugees, recognising not only their humanitarian needs but also the potential benefits they brought to Britain. Nevertheless, the quality press did not support the large-scale entry of refugees into Britain. The cautious policies of the government were encouraged, and it was not until it was too late for any effective action to be taken that the *Times* appreciated the urgency of the situation and urged the Government to introduce more speedy and generous procedures. The *Telegraph* remained committed to the existing policies and on occasion adopted a tone similar to that of the *Mail* and the *Express* when dismissing the possibility of Britain taking more refugees. The popular press was generally more hypocritical, offering perfunctory expressions of sympathy while vehemently insisting that Britain had done all that could be expected. The agitated and repeated insistence of their editorial columns that allowing more refugees into Britain would jeopardise British interests mirrored the histrionics of the fascist press and comes close to Kushner’s theory of exclusionist antisemitism. That said, the reports filed by their foreign correspondents demonstrated more empathy with the refugees’ plight. Having seen firsthand the reality of the persecution, and the difficulties the

refugees faced, it is natural that the correspondents' reports should display more understanding than the articles and editorials penned by London-based staff, who, divorced from the harsh reality of the refugees' plight and perhaps genuinely believing that things could not be as bad as had been claimed, argued that Britain could not afford to admit more refugees.

REFUGEES AND THE FASCIST PRESS

The fascist press shared the concern of the popular press that refugees were a threat to the job prospects of British subjects, although the fascist press often gave the impression that the fears of the popular press were already fully realised. As early as 1929 the *Fascist* complained that aliens congested the labour market to the detriment of native Britons who were unemployed.¹²⁹ In June 1933 the front page of the *Fascist* featured an excerpt from the *Daily Herald* raising union concerns that refugees from Germany were displacing British workers in the entertainment industry.¹³⁰ The link made between the presence of 'aliens' and the length of British dole queues by the *Express* in the middle of 1933 was soon repeated by the *Blackshirt*. Headlines such as 'TOO MANY ALIENS' were followed by claims that there were 2,000,000 unemployed yet 'thousands of jobs are being given to aliens.'¹³¹

There were also similarities in the terms used by the popular press and the fascist papers throughout the second half of the 1930s. For example, an article by Henry J. Gibbs claimed that the 'influx' of aliens was leading to an increase in vice.¹³² Similarly, under the headline 'ALIEN PENETRATION', an article in the *Fascist* in February by Lieutenant Colonel A. H. Lane, author of *The Alien Menace*, asserts that:

The influx of Aliens has greatly increased during the last four years, for the reason that thousands of Jews (mostly revolutionaries) from Germany have come over here, many of them getting jobs.¹³³

This single sentence incorporates three of the major themes of the fascist press: antisemitism, the threat to Britain, especially in regard to jobs, represented by refugees, and the perceived link between Jews and communist revolution. The front page of *Action* sported triumphant headlines claiming ‘JEWISH INVASION STEMMED’ due to the activities of the BUF, which had, apparently, mobilised the will of the people and prevented the Government from allowing ‘thousands of Jews to flood in’ to Britain.¹³⁴ *Southern Blackshirt* in November 1938 argued that money needed by unemployed British workers was being ‘taken’ by an ‘influx of alien Jews’ who were the beneficiaries of the powerful influence of ‘International Finance’ which controlled the press, the political parties and the politicians.¹³⁵ An editorial in March 1939 referred to the ‘protests at the refugee influx’, which took place in January. An article in the same issue claimed that British workers were ‘threatened by the hordes of refugees pouring into the country.’¹³⁶

While the fascist press had frequently expressed concern about the loss of ‘British’ jobs to aliens, an area of particular concern was the impact of Jewish refugees on the medical profession. *Action* was frequently critical of the number of refugees practising medicine or undertaking medical research in Britain. Examples include headlines such as ‘JEWS IN HARLEY STREET BRITISH DOCTORS DO NOT WANT THEM’ and ‘Austrian “Quacks” Set Up In Practice.’¹³⁷ Although the second headline implies that Austrian doctors were practising “irregularly” to the detriment of British doctors, the text merely

suggests that it would be possible for them to do so. In the same issue a reader's letter printed across two columns, with a large headline proclaiming 'ALIEN INVASION', provided a draft for other readers to send to their MPs protesting at 'the increasing number of alien Jews who are being provided with an occupational sanctuary in my land.' The draft went on to allege that hundreds of medical and dental practitioners were practising 'irregularly.' Although no evidence was provided to support these allegations the draft demanded to know why no legal action was taken against these 'quacks.'¹³⁸

The fascist press were also concerned with the threat to the employment prospects of other workers. Manchester factories were said to be 'over-run with aliens yet British workers find it difficult to find employment.'¹³⁹ The *Blackshirt*, responding to reports of the proposed deportation of an unemployed Irishman on remand for fighting, reiterated the constant complaint that Jewish refugees received favourable treatment:

Out of work gentiles are not wanted in Britain, while every crawling alien who creeps into this country unchallenged is aided in getting a job, and welcomed as some chosen being to receive the utmost consideration.¹⁴⁰

There were also concerns that 'Jews were now invading the taxi business to the detriment of Britons.'¹⁴¹ Mosley was quick to exploit this issue and meetings for London taxi drivers were arranged for 30 May and 27 June 1938. The report of a meeting of the Barnes, Mortlake and East Sheen Chamber of Commerce to discuss the number of Jewish refugees setting up as small traders was used as a platform to rehearse the BUF's 'Keep the lot out' slogan and to repeat its previous attack on the alleged 'influx of Jewish refugees into the medical and dental professions.' Doctors and dentists, however, had the protection of their respective professional bodies, though, as these were said to be under pressure from the

government to be sympathetic to refugees to the detriment of British citizens, it is obvious that the BUF did not consider this protection to be worth much. Shopkeepers had no protection and *Action* argued that only the licensing of shops could ensure 'BRITISH TRADE FOR BRITISH PEOPLE.' Traders were encouraged to 'band together against any influx of foreign Jewish refugees' and also to 'protest against the number of naturalised aliens and Jews who are also in business over here.'¹⁴² References to refugees were usually followed by suggestions that they 'take work away from our own people.'¹⁴³ Another example of this was the 'special investigation' undertaken by Patrick Moir, a BUF member, into the poor conditions of workers in the hotel trade, which he linked to the employment of refugees. Employers were said to be proposing that 'more foreigners should be brought into the trade to "teach our workers a lesson."'¹⁴⁴ In January 1939 *Southern Blackshirt* attempted once again to 'nail the lie that there is any shortage of employable workers in the hotel trade ...' and, therefore, there was no 'necessity to import labour for hotel work.' In case there was any doubt, the editorial made plain what was required: 'A lot less yapping about the suffering of aliens and a closer interest in [the] working conditions of Britons ...'¹⁴⁵ In the same issue *Southern Blackshirt* was critical of the National Union of Journalists for promoting an appeal by its National Executive Committee for aid to Czechoslovakian journalists.¹⁴⁶

Refugees were also accused of taking jobs away from British domestic servants, and in the *Fascist* Jewish women were accused of 'sweating' young female refugees, as evidenced by letters to the *Jewish Chronicle* that complained of having to pay young, untrained refugees twenty or twenty five shillings a week, when ten shillings 'pocket money should be quite enough.'¹⁴⁷ Government

claims that some refugees provided jobs for the unemployed were rejected as nonsense.¹⁴⁸ The fascists also opposed any money, whether from the government or from charitable donations, being spent on refugees. In particular, Lord Baldwin's appeal and the Lord Mayor's Mansion House Fund were criticised.¹⁴⁹ A *Southern Blackshirt* editorial went so far as to claim that 'any Briton who subscribes for foreigners while our own people are in need is a traitor to his own kind.'¹⁵⁰ The same issue also carried two articles criticising the cinema industry for giving ten percent of one day's proceeds to refugee charities while paying low wages to its workers and ignoring the distressed areas of Britain.¹⁵¹ Similar views were expressed in the *Fascist*.¹⁵² The alleged link between refugees and unemployment was reinforced in *Southern Blackshirt*, with a front page spread and the entire leader column devoted to the topic; the gist of the matter for the BUF was 'BRITAIN CANNOT AFFORD TO SUPPORT FOREIGNERS.'¹⁵³ The subject was rehashed again in the following issue.¹⁵⁴ Even the opening of a home for refugee children was opposed, as one day those children would be competing for jobs.¹⁵⁵

As international tensions grew the fascist press paid less attention to refugees and concentrated their efforts on countering alleged 'warmongering' engineered by 'International Finance.' The first issue of *British Union News*, however, found space to complain:

No matter where we turn we see Jews everywhere, and now that all the old democratic parties are so busy bringing thousands more into the country, East London gets the brunt, until our streets are full of alien Jews, who cannot even speak our tongue.¹⁵⁶

The fascist press was consistent in its rejection of any aid being given to refugees. In the image of Britain projected by the fascist press all British resources were needed to relieve unemployment and poverty in Britain, nothing could be spared

for the relief of foreigners who were portrayed as undeserving, greedy and grasping. Allowing any refugees into Britain was seen as threatening the prospects of the unemployed or those working in the trades or professions that the refugees were qualified to enter. That the majority of refugees were in transit to other countries was ignored.

CONCLUSION

This chapter reveals elements of an overlapping discourse between the mainstream and fascist press. Both expressed the hope that a revitalised Germany would take its rightful place in international affairs, thus contributing to the stability of Europe. Both also shared an appreciation of the Nazi regime's vigorous suppression of communism. At times the popular press rivalled the fascist press in their expressions of admiration and respect for Hitler and initially they also welcomed his stance on improving the German economy and imposing order. Nevertheless, despite the enthusiasm of the popular press and the more cautious support of the quality press for aspects of the Nazi regime, their condemnation of the persecution of the Jews clearly separates them from the viewpoint of the fascist press on this issue. However, the attitudes of the mainstream press to refugees were more complex.

While Wasserstein clearly recognises the complexity of decision making in democratic politics, his suggestion that the British Government was more accommodating than other governments is faint praise if considered closely.¹⁵⁷ The British Government, conscious of the potential for public antipathy to Jews to develop further, remained cautious in admitting refugees.¹⁵⁸ The British press was complicit in maintaining both the public's attitude and the Government's caution.

As international tensions increased the *Times* did press for more refugees to be admitted, but once war was declared the Government was unlikely to respond favourably. The public's attitude to refugees was largely defined by British antisemitism, as discussed in the previous chapter. Kushner cites evidence from the Mass Observation Archives to support the argument that the events of *Kristallnacht* had soon faded from people's minds. He also uses examples from the archives to suggest that the majority of those polled believed that the Jews were the authors of their own misfortune.¹⁵⁹ However, concentrating on these few examples, without making clear the extent to which they are representative of the whole, obscures the overall picture and, particularly in the case of the popular press, distorts our view of the relationship between the press and the public on this issue.¹⁶⁰ The *Mail* and the *Express*, especially, were not merely reflecting public attitudes and fears regarding refugees, the hectoring tone used in editorials suggests they were attempting to heighten them.

Although the mainstream press adopted a very different attitude to that of the fascist press regarding the persecution of the Jews in Germany, ensuring that the public were fully aware of the nature of the Nazi regime, the popular press blurred the boundaries between the fascist and the mainstream press on the issue of refugees. Despite the reports of persecution and the editorials denouncing it, the popular press continued its opposition to the presence of refugees in Britain in terms that were akin to those of the fascist press. The similarities of tone and language were marked and, although the overall impression of the papers is very different, many of the editorial comments of the popular press could be transferred to the fascist press without appearing out of place. While this suggests that, in respect of its attitudes to refugees, British fascism was not estranged from

mainstream opinion the motivation that underlay those attitudes differed. The British fascists were clearly driven by exclusionist antisemitism, and the expression of its opposition to refugees relied heavily on stereotyped images of Jews..

The previous chapter has shown that during the 1930s the mainstream press appeared content with the existence of discrete Jewish communities, and gave implicit praise to 'British' Jews who had integrated. Yet, there was some evidence of pressure on refugees to conform, and the Tory press clearly subscribed to the view that the activities of Jews in continental Europe contributed to antisemitism, all of which would support Kushner's concept of a 'liberal' antisemitism. However, while the adamant refusal of the Tory popular press to tolerate the admittance of any refugees better fits the model of 'exclusionist' antisemitism, it could be argued that, although the vast majority of refugees were Jewish, the papers' exclusionist attitude extended to any refugees regardless of race or creed and did not encompass Jews already settled in Britain. This stood in contrast to Britain's fascist organisations, whose opposition to the refugees was ideologically grounded in antisemitism, and which, to varying degrees, proposed the exclusion of all Jews from mainstream society, be it through second-class citizenship, expulsion, or even extermination.

¹ Extracts from this chapter appear in 'Beyond the Pale? - Antisemitism and the British Fascist and National Press 1925-1939', *Holocaust Studies* [forthcoming 2010].

² Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jewsof Europe 1939-1945* (Leicester University Press, London, 1999, 2nd ed.), pp. 7, 9 – 10, & 117. A. J. Sherman,

Island Refuge: Britain and The Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939 (Frank Cass, Ilford, 1994, 2nd ed.), pp. 3, & 266-7.

³ William Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue* (Routledge, London, 1997), pp. 26-32, & 216; Louise London, *Whitehall and The Jews 1922-1948*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000), pp. 8, 273-5.

⁴ Colin Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?* (Faber & Faber Ltd, London, 1991), p. 32.

⁵ Andrew Sharf, *The British Press and Jews Under Nazi Rule* (Oxford University Press, London, 1964), p. 22.

⁶ Tony Kushner has pointed out that Douglas Reed, the *Times* correspondent in Berlin until 1938 was an antisemite and an early holocaust denier, see Tony Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale? British Reactions to Nazi Anti-Semitism, 1933-39', *Immigrants and Minorities* vol. 8, no. 1 (1989) p. 151. See also R. Thurlow, 'Anti-Nazi Anti-Semite: The Case of Douglas Reed', *Patterns Of Prejudice*, vol. 18, no. 1 (1984) pp 23-4. However, there is nothing in the *Times*' reports that suggests this.

⁷ For a comprehensive study of British immigration policy and the Government's reaction to the Nazi persecution of the Jews see Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000).

⁸ Stephen Dorril, *Blackshirt* (Viking, London, 2006), pp. 147, 244, & 269.

⁹ G. W. Price, *Extra-Special Correspondent* (George G. Harrop, London, 1957).

¹⁰ *Times*, 31 Jan 1933, p. 11.

¹¹ *Telegraph*, 1 Feb 1933, p. 10.

¹² *Times*, 17 Feb 1933, p. 13.

¹³ See *Times*, 2 Feb 1933, p.10; 3 Feb 1933, p. 10; 4 Feb 1933, p. 10; 6 Feb 1933, pp. 11 & 12.

¹⁴ See *Times*, 1 Mar 1933, p.15; 4 Mar 1933, p. 13; & 15 Mar 1933, p.15.

¹⁵ *Times*, 22 Mar 1933, p. 15.

¹⁶ For examples relating to the Nazi regime's persecution of the Churches see *Times*, 30 Mar 1933, p. 13; 1 Dec 1933, p.15; 10 May 1934, p. 13; 12 May 1934, p. 11; & 15 May 1934. For the Reichstag fire see *Times*, 1 Mar 1933, p. 15; 2 Dec 1933, p. 11; 4 Dec 1933, p. 13; 14 Dec 1933, pp. 15 & 16; & 3 May 1934, p. 14. For concentration camps see *Times*, 23 Mar 1933, p. 14; 25 Mar 1933, p. 12; 2 May 1934, p. 15; & 28 May 1934, p. 13. For persecution of the Jews see *Times*,

15 Mar 1933, p.13; 28 Mar 1933, p.13; 30 Mar 1933, p.13; 4 Dec 1933, p.13; & 12 May 1934, p.11.

¹⁷ *Telegraph*, 1 Apr 1933, p. 11.

¹⁸ See *Telegraph*, 1 Apr 1933, p. 11 for report of letter received signed by sixteen German journalists.

¹⁹ *Telegraph*, 1 Apr 1933, p. 12.

²⁰ *Telegraph*, 3 Apr 1933, p. 10.

²¹ *Times*, 3 April 1933, p. 15. See also *Times*, 5 Apr 1933, p. 15 for editorial arguing that the persecution of the Jews, in addition to individual suffering, was harming the German economy.

²² *Mail*, 10 Jul 1933, p. 10. Dorril, pp. 146-7 & 244.

²³ *Express*, 29 Nov 1932, p.10.

²⁴ *Express*, 1 Dec 1932, p. 10.

²⁵ *Express*, 22 Feb 1933, p. 10. See <http://www.seftondelmer.co.uk/> [21 March 2019] for an account of Sefton Delmer's role in the production of 'black propaganda' during the war.

²⁶ *Express*, 25 Feb 1933, p. 3. Delmer also accompanied Hitler on a flight from Königsberg to Berlin on the day of the election, see *Daily Express* 6 Mar 1933, p. 1.

²⁷ *Express*, 2 Feb 1933, p. 1.

²⁸ *Express*, 2 Feb 1933, p. 2.

²⁹ *Express*, 18 Mar 1933, p. 11.

³⁰ *Express*, 4 Apr 1933, p. 10. For detail of the attempt to organise an international boycott of German goods, see Sharf, pp. 101-3.

³¹ *Express*, 17 April 1933, p. 6.

³² *Express*, 11 April 1933, p. 20. A later article, based on a conversation with an actress who claimed to be a friend of Hitler, explained that Hitler would never marry because he was incapable of concession or devoting even a minute piece of himself to anything other than his work. *Express*, 26 Apr 1934, p. 1.

³³ *Express*, 3 May 1933, p. 19.

³⁴ For more biographical details see Alyson Pendlebury, University of Southampton, *Gilbert Frankau*, 'The Literary Encyclopaedia' Nov 2002.

<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=5205> [21 March 2010]

-
- ³⁵ *Express*, 9 May 1933, p. 10.
- ³⁶ *Express*, 30 Jan 1934, p. 8. Pembroke Stephens later moved to the *Daily Telegraph* and was killed by Japanese machine-gun fire during the Chinese-Japanese conflict of 1937, while observing the fall of Shanghai from a water tower in the neutral Settlement. Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, London, 1975), p. 271.
- ³⁷ *Express*, 6 May 1934, p. 3.
- ³⁸ On 10 Jun 1933 the *Mail* published an article, 'Youth Triumphant', by Rothermere on his visit to Germany praising the swift action of Hitler's Government, the resurgence of national pride and the role played by young Germans. Rothermere dismissed those who criticised the Nazi regime and claimed that alleged atrocities were merely unfortunate isolated incidents exaggerated by Hitler's opponents.
- ³⁹ *Mail*, 3 Aug 1934, p. 10.
- ⁴⁰ *Mail*, 3 Aug 1934, p. 10.
- ⁴¹ *Mail*, 3 Aug 1934, p. 11.
- ⁴² *Mail*, 6 Aug 1934, pp. 9 & 10.
- ⁴³ *Mail*, 7 Aug 1934, p. 8.
- ⁴⁴ *Mail*, 20 Aug 1934, p. 10. For more details of the plebiscite, see Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth' Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987), pp 67-9.
- ⁴⁵ *Express*, 20 Aug 1934, p. 8.
- ⁴⁶ Dorril, pp. 241, 287, & 319.
- ⁴⁷ *Mirror*, 3 Aug 1934, p. 11.
- ⁴⁸ *Mirror*, 7 Aug 1934, p. 11.
- ⁴⁹ *Telegraph*, 2 Jul 1934, P. 12.
- ⁵⁰ *Times*, 2 Jul 1934, p. 17.
- ⁵¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Jun 1934, p. 11; 7 Jun 1934, p. 13; 8 Jun 1934, p. 19; 9 Jun 1934, p. 18; 11 Jun 1934, pp. 9, 13 & 16; & 14 Jun 1934, p. 6.
- ⁵² *Manchester Guardian*, 2 Jul 1934, p. 10.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ *Mirror*, 2 Jul 1934, p. 13.
- ⁵⁵ *Mirror*, 3 Jul 1934, p. 11.

-
- ⁵⁶ *Blackshirt*, 1 Apr 1933, p. 1.
- ⁵⁷ *Blackshirt*, 13 July 1934, p. 11?
- ⁵⁸ *Blackshirt*, 7 Dec 1934, p.3.
- ⁵⁹ *Action*, 18 Aug, 1937, p. 12.
- ⁶⁰ *Blackshirt*, 17 Apr 1933, p. 3.
- ⁶¹ *Blackshirt*, 2 Mar 1933, p. 2.
- ⁶² *Blackshirt*, 1 Apr 1933, p. 1.
- ⁶³ For example see ‘The New Germany no. 2 Trade Unions’, *Blackshirt*, 1 Jun 1933, p.4. See also *Action*, 21 Aug 1937, p. 9 for an article on ‘Healthcare in the New Germany.’
- ⁶⁴ *Blackshirt*, 15-22 Jul 1933, pp. 1 &4. At this time Raven was not using the surname Thomson.
- ⁶⁵ *Action*, 18 Aug, 1937, p. 12.
- ⁶⁶ *Fascist*, Mar 1933, p.1. Hoffman ran a Munich based organisation that mailed German propaganda to German emigrants, particularly those who still had relatives in Germany and were, therefore, likely to be cooperative. See, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box31/t297e02.html>. [21 March 2010]
- ⁶⁷ *Fascist*, Apr 1933, p. 1
- ⁶⁸ *Fascist*, Jan 1934, p. 3.
- ⁶⁹ *Fascist*, Jun 1934, p. 2.
- ⁷⁰ *Fascist*, Sep 1934, p. 3.
- ⁷¹ *Fascist*, Dec 1934, p. 1.
- ⁷² London, pp. 1-2.
- ⁷³ London, pp. 16-8.
- ⁷⁴ London, pp. 5-6.
- ⁷⁵ *Times*, Nov 27 1924, p. 14
- ⁷⁶ *Times* Nov 27 1924, p. 14; 2 Dec 1924, pp. 15 & 16; 4 Dec 1924, p.15; & 8 Dec 1924, p. 15 &16.
- ⁷⁷ *Times*, 8 Dec 1924, p 15.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ⁷⁹ *Times*, 27 Nov 1924, p. 13; 28 Nov 1924, p. 15; 2 Dec 1924, p. 15; 2 Dec 1924, p. 15.
- ⁸⁰ *Express*, 18 May 1932, p. 6.

-
- ⁸¹ *Express*, 21 Apr 1933, p. 2.
- ⁸² *Express*, 26 May 1933, p. 20.
- ⁸³ *Times*, 3 May 1934, p. 8.
- ⁸⁴ *Times*, 24 May 1933, p. 27.
- ⁸⁵ *Times*, 3 May 1934, p. 15.
- ⁸⁶ *Telegraph*, 7 Jul 1934, p. 6.
- ⁸⁷ *Telegraph*, 23 Mar 1938, p. 14.
- ⁸⁸ *Times*, 23 Mar 1938, p. 15.
- ⁸⁹ *Times*, 8 Apr 1938, p. 17.
- ⁹⁰ See for example *Times*, 11 Nov 1938, pp. 14 & 15; 12 Nov 1938, p. 12; 14 Nov 1938, pp. 9 & 12; 15 Nov 1938, p. 14; & 16 Nov 1938, p.14. Also, *Telegraph*, 11 Nov 1938, p. 16.
- ⁹¹ *Times*, 16 Nov 1938, p. 15. *Telegraph* 22 Nov 1938, p. 16.
- ⁹² *Times*, 3 Nov 1938, p.16.
- ⁹³ *Times*, 15 Nov 1938, p. 8; 16 Nov 1938, pp. 13 & 15; 19 Nov 1938, p. 7.
- ⁹⁴ Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale?', p. 152.
- ⁹⁵ Instigated by President Roosevelt for the purpose of finding an international solution to the refugee problem, the conference took place in July 1938 but its only achievement was the setting up of an International Governmental Committee on Refugees. Despite expressions of sympathy for the refugees' plight the majority of delegates declined to admit more refugees. See Wasserstein, pp.7-8.
- ⁹⁶ *Times*, 11 Jan 1939, p. 11.
- ⁹⁷ For examples relating Baldwin's fund see *Times*, 11 Jan 1939, p. 11; 25 Feb 1939, p. 13; & 8 Jul 1939, p. 13. For the SPSL see *Times*, 6 Feb 1939, p.3.
- ⁹⁸ *Times*, 24 Feb 1939, p. 12.
- ⁹⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 10 Dec 1938, p. 12.
- ¹⁰⁰ For examples see *Times*, 20 Apr 1939, p. 15; 22 July 1939, p. 13.
- ¹⁰¹ *Times*, 8 Aug 1939, p. 13.
- ¹⁰² *Times*, 11 Aug 1939, p.11. In June 1939 the Richborough camp in Kent, provided a temporary home to 1,500 refugees.
- ¹⁰³ For examples of persecution in Germany see *Telegraph*, 9 Jan 1939, p. 13; 14 Jan 1939, p. 11; & 7 June 1939, p. 15. For the stories of refuges given in court see *Telegraph*, 6 Jan 1939, p. 6; & 7 Jan 1939, p. 5

-
- ¹⁰⁴ *Telegraph*, 11 Aug 1939, p. 12.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Telegraph*, 23 Jun 1939, p.16.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Mail*, 23 Mar 1938, p. 10.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Express*, 24 Mar 1938, p. 12.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Express*, 8 Apr 1938, p. 12.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Express*, 11 Nov 1938, p. 12.
- ¹¹⁰ *Express*, 17 Nov 1938, p. 10.
- ¹¹¹ *Express*, 21 Nov 1938, p. 12.
- ¹¹² *Express*, 24 May 1939, p. 12.
- ¹¹³ *Express*, 19 Jun, p. 13.
- ¹¹⁴ *Express*, 22 Jun 1939, p. 10.
- ¹¹⁵ *Mirror*, 26 Mar 1938, p. 11.
- ¹¹⁶ *Mirror*, 16 Jul 1938, p. 11.
- ¹¹⁷ *Mirror*, 27 Jul 1938, p. 2 & 5 Aug 1938, p. 13.
- ¹¹⁸ For example see *Daily Mirror*, 2 Aug 1938, p. 2; 4 Aug 1938, p. 13; & 10 Aug 1938, p. 15. Earlier examples include 10 Jan 1938, p. 5 & 14 Jan 1938, p. 17.
- ¹¹⁹ *Mirror*, 14 Nov 1938, p. 11.
- ¹²⁰ *Mirror*, 15 Nov 1938, p. 15.
- ¹²¹ *Mail*, 14 Nov 1938, p. 12.
- ¹²² *Mail*, 21 11 1938, p. 12.
- ¹²³ *Mail*, 22 Nov 1938, p. 10.
- ¹²⁴ *Mail*, 9 Jun 1939, p. 11.
- ¹²⁵ *Mail*, 14 Mar 1939, p. 12.
- ¹²⁶ *Mail*, 15 May 1939, p. 7.
- ¹²⁷ *Mail*, 11 May 1939, p. 9.
- ¹²⁸ *Mail*, 9 Jun 1939, p. 11.
- ¹²⁹ *Fascist*, Jul 1929, p. 1.
- ¹³⁰ *Fascist*, Jun 1933, p. 1. The following month, the *Fascist* published a list of additional jobs potentially created by the refugees. The list was predicated on the allegedly criminal and immoral nature of Jewish refugees and included police, firemen, income tax inspectors, and builders to provide prisons and insane asylums etc. *Fascist*, Jul 1933, p. 3.
- ¹³¹ *Blackshirt*, 2-9 Dec 1933, p. 1.

-
- ¹³² *Blackshirt*, 174, Aug 22 1936, p. 5.
- ¹³³ *Fascist*, Feb 1937, p. 3.
- ¹³⁴ *Action*, 26 Nov 1938, p. 1.
- ¹³⁵ *Southern Blackshirt*, Nov 1938, p. 3. See also p. 7 'the Invasion Continues' and Mar 1939, p. 2, editorial refers to 'influx', and p. 5 to 'hoards.'
- ¹³⁶ *Southern Blackshirt*, Mar 1939, pp. 2 & 5
- ¹³⁷ *Action*, 21 May 1938, p. 11.
- ¹³⁸ *Action*, Jul 30 1938, pp. 10 & 14. Two other letters critical of Jewish doctors and dentists are also printed on p. 14.
- ¹³⁹ *Action*, 12 Mar 1936, p. 16.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Blackshirt*, 29 Jan 1938, p. 5.
- ¹⁴¹ *Blackshirt*, Jun 1938, p. 1.
- ¹⁴² *Action*, 6 Aug 1938, p.6.
- ¹⁴³ *Action*, 26 Nov 1938, p. 3.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Southern Blackshirt*, Nov 1938, p. 1.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Southern Blackshirt*, Jan 1939, p. 2.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Southern Blackshirt*, Jan 1939, p. 3.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Fascist*, Feb 1939, p. 2.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Fascist*, Apr 1939, p. 2.
- ¹⁴⁹ For example see *Action*, 17 Dec 1938, pp 1 & 2; *Southern Blackshirt*, Oct 1938, p. 3; & Jan 1939, p. 2
- ¹⁵⁰ *Southern Blackshirt*, Feb 1939, p. 2.
- ¹⁵¹ *Southern Blackshirt*, Feb 1939, pp. 5 & 8.
- ¹⁵² *Fascist*, Jan 1939, p. 3.
- ¹⁵³ *Southern Blackshirt*, Feb 1939, pp.1 & 2.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Southern Blackshirt*, Mar 1939, p. 8.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Southern Blackshirt*, Apr 1939, p. 9.
- ¹⁵⁶ *British Union News*, Jun 1938, p. 1. *British Union News* replaced the *Blackshirt*.
- ¹⁵⁷ Wasserstein, p. 8.
- ¹⁵⁸ Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, p. 32.

¹⁵⁹ Some examples are given in Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale?', p. 152. Others can be found in Tony Kushner, *We Europeans? Mass-Observation, 'Race' and British Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2004).

¹⁶⁰ For example the February 1939 survey conducted in Poplar, Limehouse, and Stepney showed 69% of men and 77% of women questioned were opposed to antisemitism, 15% of men and 4% of women were definitely antisemitic, 11% of men and 14% of women had mixed feelings and 5% of men and women were slightly antisemitic. M-O A. TC62 Box 1 A. Also in February 1939 a survey of the attitudes of school children showed a small number of children were antisemitic, most were opposed to antisemitism, although a significant number had expressed no clear preference or had mixed feelings. M-O A, TC62 Box 1 C. A survey of London schoolboys showed 27 opposed to Hitler's treatment of the Jews and two in favour. Only three were in favour of all Jews coming to England, with 17 against. That the question specified all Jews may have influenced the answer. M-O A, TC62 Box 1 C.

DEMONISATION OF THE LEFT AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The antipathy of British fascists to the left, in particular towards communism, had a strong ideological base and was as vigorously expressed as their antisemitism. Their concerns were echoed by significant sections of the mainstream. In Britain, upper and middle-class anxiety regarding the political left was largely based on fear of a Bolshevik style revolution, a fear that was fostered during the 1920s by the growing strength of the trade unions and the Labour party, the founding of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in 1920, the ‘Zinoviev letter’ of 1924 and the trepidation surrounding the General Strike in 1926.¹ However, by the end of the decade apprehension had eased considerably, aided by the lack of revolutionary fervour during the short-lived General Strike, the anti-union legislation that followed, and the commitment of the unions and the Labour party to the parliamentary system.² Matthew Worley has argued that between the wars the Labour party was expanding its appeal to voters and was increasingly recognised as a legitimate part of the parliamentary process.³ Despite this, elements of the Tory mainstream press were prone to revive anti-socialist sentiment on occasion, and British fascists did not relax their vituperative opposition to the left.

This chapter studies the expression of opposition to the left in both the mainstream and fascist press. The analysis of articles relating to the Labour party and the coverage of municipal and general elections tests the reliability of Worley’s assessment. Additionally, the examination of coverage of the wider spectrum of the left and of reports about the Spanish Civil War demonstrates the extent to which each

represented another point of convergence between the British fascists and the mainstream.

FASCISM AND THE LEFT

There is a measure of consensus among historians that fascism rejects the central tenets of socialism. This is despite the far-left political origins of many of the leading fascists and the strong connections between some fascist movements and socialism identified by Paul Hayes, which, at an ideological level, Roger Eatwell describes as fascism having ‘more points of contact’ with socialism than with other ideologies.⁴ Meanwhile, Roger Griffin has argued that fascism, while nationalist, is not necessarily anti-internationalist and, though defining fascism as unquestionably anti-Bolshevik, he accepts Sternhell’s argument that its expression of anti-socialism is more ambiguous.⁵ Nonetheless, in the British case fascism was rooted in a fear of Bolshevik revolution, as Eatwell notes.⁶

The demonisation of Communism

Certainly from the earliest incarnations of fascism in Britain there were repeated condemnations of communism. Indeed, the BF emerged largely in response to fear of a Bolshevik revolution in Britain. It represented an extension of mainstream fears developed into an organisation intended to have the potential to act should those fears materialise into real revolt. The BF’s support for the status quo and its initial focus on anti-communism resulted in a reputation for offering ‘Conservatism with Knobs On.’⁷ Most condemnations of communism in the fascist press were phrased in ways that dehumanised its proponents and portrayed them as an evil, demonic, force intent on destroying civilised society. A recurring theme was the linking of communism with

Godless atheism or, in an attempt to demonise it further, with the Devil. British fascists exploited every opportunity to attract Christian support by portraying themselves as the only pro-active defence against the communist anti-Christ. The *Fascist Bulletin* in June 1925 referred to communism as the 'Devil's work', an abomination that threatened the sanctity of marriage and used murder and persecution to achieve domination.⁸ The anti-Christian nature of communism was emphasised and this was underlined by repeated claims that communism was led or influenced by Jews.⁹ The BF's actions in response to communism in Britain were more low-key than its heated prose; there were occasional attacks on the sellers of left-wing papers and Harry Pollitt, the CPGB leader, was briefly abducted.¹⁰

The IFL also attempted to demonise British communists, though in a less literal fashion. In the *Fascist* it was claimed that in Britain communist teachers, mainly women, regularly took part in 'semi-secret "nudist" gatherings and camps where the foulness of the proceedings requires to be seen to be credited.'¹¹ Like the BF, the IFL was relentless in linking Communism to Jewish influence, describing it as 'the world's greatest deception of all time.'¹²

Employing terminology similar to that of the BF, the BUF activist, Captain Gordon-Canning, described the left in France as representing the 'powers of darkness', and accused the Soviets of working for the aims of Lucifer.¹³ In the same article he, bizarrely, portrayed Hitler as Gabriel, standing for the dominion of God and ready to hurl 'Lucifer and his blood-red cohorts' back into the abyss. Although overwrought, this type of imagery was consistent with the BUF's proclaimed allegiance to Christianity. Priests who appeared to express left-wing views could expect to be pilloried in the fascist press.¹⁴

There were also similarities between the BF's portrayal of communists as murdering barbarians, and *Action's* accusations of Bolsheviks committing murder, torture and rape. Not only did the paper allege that atrocities were being committed 'abroad', it claimed that the same type of men were active in Britain.¹⁵ The evils of communism were frequently linked to the Jews. Joyce referred to the 'Red Front' in Britain as cowardly, Jewish and violent.¹⁶ In addition there were repeated references to the violent and cowardly nature of communists who were alleged to attack fascists only when they heavily outnumbered them, using sticks and razors against unarmed fascists, and who did not hesitate to use violence against women.¹⁷ Joyce referred to communists as 'sub-men.'¹⁸ This type of copy was intended to heighten existing concerns regarding communism and persuade readers that the danger was imminent.

The BUF attempted to drive a wedge between the leadership of the left and working-class men and women, using similar techniques across the whole spectrum of the left. *Action* presented the communist leaders as regarding the proletariat as fools needing leadership, while the intelligentsia were portrayed as pink pansies with long, flowing hair, exotic and eastern scent and a foreign accent who turned yellow at the mention of fascism.¹⁹ It was common for the BUF press to raise the spectre of Soviet control and the Communist party was accused of representing the interests of Moscow rather than those of the working people of Britain.²⁰

Denigration of the Left

Despite Mosley's previous form on the left-wing of the Labour party and the New Party's socialist leanings, the BUF press was antagonistic towards the Labour party. For Joyce there was no great doctrinal difference between the socialists, the Labour party, and communism.²¹ Raven Thomson claimed that all left-wing political parties

offered a mix of corrupt futility and bloodstained reality.²² Links were made between the Communists, the Labour party and blasphemy and acts of sacrilege.²³ In an attempt to undermine Labour support, members of the Labour party were tarred with the brush of Communism and its leaders were accused of being uninterested in the plight of the workers or the unemployed. *Action* alleged that they played at being statesmen and pocketed their expenses while foreign socialists demanded the blood of the British and German working class.²⁴ The Labour leadership was presented as incompetent, yet dangerous. One front-page headline declared 'Labour Blunders to Revolution.'²⁵ Labour's alleged financial incompetence and callous attitude to the unemployed was highlighted in a report of an unemployed man with a wife and five children who had been sent to the workhouse, thereby reducing even further the chance of him finding work, and increasing by ten shillings a week the cost to the rate-payers of keeping the family.²⁶

Similarly, the trade unions were also rebuked for their poor performance in promoting the interests of their members, for ill-treating their employees, and for less than brotherly disputes between unions.²⁷ In *Action* John Emery regularly criticised the TU leadership in his column 'Industrial Notes' claiming they were ineffective and in the pocket of the employers.²⁸ Specific unions were also singled out for criticism; it was alleged that the practices of the National Union of Seamen exposed sailors to Jewish exploitation, that the leaders of the Welsh miners' union were willing to see members' wages reduced to the level paid to Polish miners in order to regain export sales, and that leaders of the Transport and General Workers Union had failed to improve the intolerable conditions of London busmen.²⁹ In contrast, John Beckett claimed that the role of the trade unions under fascism would be strengthened giving them a position of equality with the employers in the running of their industries.³⁰

The BUF press continually reinforced the message that the working class was being betrayed by its leaders, who should have been safeguarding workers' interests but were instead lining their own pockets and attempting to provoke a class war under instructions from Moscow. In all of their coverage of left-wing politics the fascist press were careful to present the working class as decent and patriotic folk misled by their leaders.

THE MAINSTREAM PRESS AND THE LEFT

Apart from organs, such as the *Herald*, that were dedicated to the cause, the mainstream British press did not embrace the left. The Tory popular press were particularly staunch in their repudiation of everything left-wing. This extended to the Co-operative societies, which together with the trade unions and socialist groups such as the Independent Labour Party, the Fabians and the Social-Democratic Federation originally founded the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) that became the Labour party. Despite the dismay of the LRC's first chairman, Frederick Rogers, at the 'solid unbending Toryism'³¹ of the Co-operative leaders, the popular press cast them as the villains of British retailing. Lords Beaverbrook and Rothermere co-operated in a long-running campaign against the societies that extended beyond the pages of the papers to public meetings and encouraged local trade associations to pass motions denouncing the Co-ops' unfair trading tactics.³² The 'charges' against the Co-ops included that they drove independent traders out of business, evaded paying tax, attempted to cut wages and increased the hours worked by their employees. It was also alleged that it was actually more expensive to shop at a Co-op than an independent trader, and that Co-op contracts with local councils disadvantaged rate-payers as well as local traders.³³ The editorials and article headlines were phrased in

terms of a battle, with emotive references to the 'fight', and the 'Co-op war front', the 'war cry of 50,000 grocers', and the 'battle for fair trade.' The societies were described as a 'menace' and a 'curse.'³⁴

The papers were less warlike in their attitudes to the Labour party. Matthew Worley argues that the Labour party's links with the Liberal party, its successful usurpation of the Liberal's progressive role, and its recruitment of more than thirty disgruntled Conservatives had aided the growth of a perception of the party as a peaceful alternative to communism and increased its appeal to a wider cross-section of voters. Additionally, Worley suggests, the party had benefited from its inclusion in government during the First World War, and from the perceived efficiency of the wartime economy, which, with its state control of key industries, had legitimised Labour's policies on national ownership.³⁵

In the run up to the May 1929 general election, the *Express* and the *Mail* had both dismissed fears that revolution was at hand. The *Express* was succinct: revolution was a joke.³⁶ The *Mail*, while also convinced that class warfare was doomed to failure, still felt the need to warn that the Bolsheviks were bent on making mischief and committing crime, and would cause damage and disorder.³⁷ The paper adopted a comparable technique when discussing the Labour party. Praise for the dignity and restraint of Ramsay MacDonald was undermined by the comment that he was striving to 'keep in order the wild men of his party and to discipline them into an appearance of respectability.'³⁸ A *Mail* editorial also linked the party to communism; referring to socialism as 'the mad doctrine which has caused such frightful misery in Russia.'³⁹ In the same piece the paper claimed that if the socialists were elected extremists would dictate policy and business would be destroyed.⁴⁰ In contrast the *Express* was not alarmed at the prospect of a socialist government.⁴¹

During campaigning for the 1934 municipal elections the *Mail* and the *Express* employed techniques similar to those of the British fascists. The papers blurred the boundaries between the Labour and Communist parties by referring to both as ‘Reds.’ On the day of the 1934 municipal elections the *Mail* editorial was headlined ‘Keep Out the Reds’ and readers were urged to vote for the Municipal Reform Party (MRP) to keep ‘the “Big Bad Wolf” of Socialism from the door.’⁴² It was claimed that the socialists would squander ratepayers’ money and ruin the business community, leading to an increase in unemployment and a heavier burden on the ratepayers. The *Express* editorial also urged support for the MRP, but in less emotive language, merely pointing out that the socialists had no definite housing plan and had conducted a negative campaign.⁴³ However, the front-page headlines had accused the socialists of ‘terrorist tactics’ and the report of a MRP meeting was interspersed with recommendations that readers should vote to prevent the election of ‘hooligans.’⁴⁴ Excerpts from this report were reprinted in *Blackshirt* in an article that dismissed the accusations of ‘fatuous politicians’ that fascists caused political disturbance at a time when ‘Red terrorism shows itself openly on our streets.’⁴⁵

While the *Mirror* was less inclined to conflate the socialists and the communists, it did advise readers to vote for the ‘sane government’ of the MRP rather than the socialist ‘don’t count the cost Party.’⁴⁶ The voters, however, paid little heed to the warnings of the popular press and there was a Labour landslide. The *Mirror* reported the result in neutral tones and ascribed the Labour victory to voter apathy, as did the *Mail*, and the *Express*.⁴⁷ According to the *Express* the socialists had made a ‘Red London.’⁴⁸

The quality press was generally much more moderate in the tone adopted in editorials or news reports relating to the TUC and the Labour party. Despite the

party's occupation of legitimate political space the prospect of a Labour government was greeted with dismay by the Tory quality press and there are clear parallels with the fears expressed in the *Mail*. The *Telegraph* alleged that the socialist leaders were dominated by 'ignorant and reckless extremists,' while the *Times* insisted that the party leadership was incapable of checking the momentum of revolutionary socialism which was linked to class war and the expectation of another general strike.⁴⁹ The *Times* also claimed that the socialists would ruin business.⁵⁰

Similarly, the possibility of socialist control of the county councils was not met with sanguinity. The Tory quality press expressed similar concerns to those of the popular press, albeit in a more measured tone, in relation to the potential risks of socialist control of county councils, particularly London. The *Times*, for example, gave substantially more coverage to the MRP manifesto than that of the socialists and published extracts that alleged that the Labour party was more concerned with the implementation of socialism and the destruction of trade than with providing municipal services, as it was pledged to 'carry out dangerous and extravagant socialist experiments.' The *Times* reinforced these claims by adding that the extravagance of the previous socialist administration had nearly proved disastrous.⁵¹ On the day of the poll the leader writer praised the MRP's record for sound government and warned that the socialists' policy was 'dangerously adventurous' and likely to lead to 'reckless spending.'⁵² The tone of the *Telegraph's* leader writers was even more heightened during the 1935 General Election campaign, and culminated in the claim that if the socialists won then 'the panic and chaos devised by Sir Stafford Cripps would paralyse the city overnight.'⁵³ None of this, however, was couched in terms that suggested that Labour was not a legitimate party within the parliamentary system, and between elections reports of Labour activity displayed no overt hostility.

The response of the quality papers to the Co-operative movement was also more positive. Although, in the same month that it published a full page devoted to the Co-operative movement including a positive appreciation of its history and five advertisements for various branches, the *Telegraph* did publish an article expressing concern at developments in the movement, which the paper interpreted as a bid for political power.⁵⁴ The *Times*, while reporting events related to the societies, expressed no qualms about the movement and went so far as to describe the popular press attacks on the Co-ops as ‘violent and ill-informed.’⁵⁵

Surprisingly, this was a view shared by the IFL which, though ‘H. H. L.’ had previously complained that the tax advantages enjoyed by the Co-ops allowed them to squeeze out independent small traders, he later claimed that the campaign against the Co-ops was a ‘great contributing factor’ to London going ‘Red.’⁵⁶ The attitude of the IFL was sanguine and the result of the election was welcomed ‘as being another big step towards the time when Britain, willingly, and with a sense of relief, will turn to Fascism as the only way out.’⁵⁷ The BUF was also largely unconcerned with the Co-ops’ activities, though they were alarmed by socialist infiltration of the organisation and were critical of the importation of large quantities of Argentine beef and of the delays in negotiating disputes with unions representing its workers.⁵⁸ Although the Nazis were averse to the German Co-op movement, the BUF press was not hostile to Co-operative principles and regarded the press campaign against the Co-ops as a plot orchestrated by the ‘alien’ owners of chain-stores, designed to set small traders and the Co-ops against each other. Reflecting practice in Italy, the BUF promised that under a fascist regime the Co-ops would play a bigger and more important part in the national economy.⁵⁹ Raven Thomson produced a pamphlet outlining the ‘proud place’ of the Co-ops in the Corporate State and the conditions attached to state

recognition and protection.⁶⁰ In practice these conditions would have neutered the Co-ops.

RESPONSES TO THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

It was in coverage of the Spanish Civil War that British fascists and some elements of the popular mainstream press were able to give full vent to their fear and hatred of the left. Despite Randolph Churchill's caustically expressed opinion that only a few 'excitable Catholics and ardent socialists think this war matters, but for the general public it's just a lot of bloody dagoes killing each other',⁶¹ events in Spain were interpreted for the readers of both the fascist and mainstream press in the context of international political developments and seemed to polarise British public opinion. Although, initially, only the politically motivated appeared to be concerned by the war, public sympathy for the Republic's plight increased as the war progressed and the response to fund raising appeals was substantial. Yet, public sympathy did not necessarily translate into support for intervention.⁶²

The question of intervention was one of the few issues to show a clear divide between Labour and Conservative attitudes. Not that either party was completely united on the issue. The majority of Conservatives supported the Government's policy, though Anthony Eden and Winston Churchill had doubts. Taylor suggests that the left-wing of the Labour party was inspired by the Republican cause, while the leadership remained committed to disarmament.⁶³ Paul Preston's interpretation of events suggests that Labour's response was more complex than Taylor allows, and was influenced by the hostility of many trade unionists to communists.⁶⁴ Pugh also emphasises the importance of hostility to the communist party and sees Labour's response to the Spanish Civil War as significant because, coupled with Hitler's rise to

power, it encouraged the party to move towards support for re-armament.⁶⁵ The party was also divided along religious lines, and Tom Buchanan notes that there was a strong Catholic minority that was opposed to the Spanish Republic and was outraged by assaults on the Church.⁶⁶

The position of the British Government was also less than clear-cut, and its foreign policy continued to employ behind the scenes intriguing with France despite the leaking of the Hoare-Laval pact.⁶⁷ Preston contends that Britain was so committed to preventing another European war that the National Government applied pressure on France to support a policy of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War.⁶⁸ Buchanan supports Preston's view on the motivation of the National Government, ascribing it largely to a sincere desire to prevent the war spreading.⁶⁹ Buchanan claims that diplomatic historians, such as Douglas Little, who attribute the National Government's policy to 'malevolent neutrality' resulting from its natural antipathy to a left of centre Spanish democracy, have failed to appreciate the complexity of the situation.⁷⁰ Little and Preston have both pointed out that British firms with commercial interests in Spain were sympathetic to the Nationalist cause.⁷¹

The British Government and public both initially supported non-intervention. Taylor suggests that government policy fitted the public mood as they wanted peace and disliked communism.⁷² However, Buchanan argues that as the public saw developments being influenced by German, Italian and Soviet intervention they became convinced that the outcome of the Spanish Civil War would have wider, international repercussions. Supporters of both sides were convinced that the future of 'European civilisation' was at stake, with one side fighting against the overthrow of democracy, and the other protecting Christian civilisation from barbarous communism.

Interestingly, clear differences emerge in the positions adopted by the British press towards the war in Spain. According to Graves and Hodge, the *Mail*, *Sketch*, *Morning Post*, and *Observer* only reported news that discredited ‘the Reds’, while the *News Chronicle* and the *Herald* supported the Republicans, although they later toed the party line on non-intervention. The *Express* and the *Mirror* were judged to be sympathetic to the Republicans but anxious not to antagonise Germany and Italy. The *Telegraph* and the *Times* claimed to be impartial, but Graves and Hodge suggest that the *Telegraph* succeeded in this respect better than the *Times*, which had censored some of the articles by its military correspondent that highlighted the potential danger to Britain of success for the Axis powers.⁷³ Generally speaking, they are correct in their analysis of the press coverage, however, they use a very broad-brush approach and do not take into account the variations in attitude within individual papers, or the way editorial comment developed as the conflict progressed.

The quality press and the war in Spain

The *Observer*, while tending to be more sympathetic to the Nationalist cause and prepared to print reports of Red atrocities garnered from German news agencies, also published reports of the killing by insurgent bombers of women and children who were doing their weekend shopping.⁷⁴ The paper could see no good outcome to the civil war only cruelty, tragedy and an end to democracy, resulting in either a Nationalist or Communist dictatorship. The editorial line was that Britain needed to keep rigidly aloof from the Spanish Civil War, in order to preserve diplomatic relations and avoid further conflict. ‘We can partake in no course that connives at the “Red ruin” in the hope of countering the black.’⁷⁵ Contrary to the assessment of Graves and Hodge, the *Observer* did report adversely on Nationalist activities. The

paper ascribed the destruction of Guernica to ‘the exclusive work of German aeroplanes and German bombs’, categorizing it as a horrible and stupid atrocity and calling for the withdrawal of all foreign forces.⁷⁶

The *Manchester Guardian* also saw danger for democratic government from both the left and the right in Spain, and was unsure whether there was more of the wild beast in a Communist mob or in the Fascist generals leading their ‘Moorish soldiers to the wholesale slaughter of the Spanish workmen.’⁷⁷ On further reflection the paper considered that both sides were guilty of brutal atrocities, adding that while the actions of the Spanish workers could not be excused they could be explained by their previous grievous exploitation; nothing could mitigate the conduct of the Nationalist military.⁷⁸ The paper supported non-intervention, but pressed for the maintenance of trade with the lawful government of Spain.⁷⁹ It printed reports from neutral sources and from supporters of both sides. Following the visits to Spain of two groups of British MPs, it published a report from the Liberal MP Wilfrid Roberts, who advocated the cause of the Spanish Government on the grounds of individual liberty and the dangers of a German influence in a fascist Spain.⁸⁰ This was closely followed by a report from the Conservative MP Anthony Crossley, which could well be a contender for the title of most egregious piece of Francoist propaganda ever printed in the mainstream press. Crossley used the terms ‘Reds’ and ‘Whites’ to describe the government and insurgent sides, clearly intending the reader to draw parallels between the civil war in Spain and the Russian revolution. He portrayed ‘Nationalist Spain’ as orderly and free from open repression. While conceding that both sides were ruthless, Crossley claimed that the atrocities committed by the Reds were worse than those committed by Russian revolutionaries. Although both sides were acknowledged to kill prisoners and those suspected of disloyalty, he asserted

that the Nationalists invariably held some sort of trial, even if it was only a formality, a distinction that made little difference to the fate of the accused.⁸¹

The *Manchester Guardian*'s report of the bombing of Guernica was detailed, but less sensational than those of the popular press. The destruction of the town, including hospitals, the machine gunning of defenceless women working in the fields and of those fleeing the bombing, and the death of a priest who tried to rescue children from a burning building were firmly attributed to German bombers, and reinforced with the reporter's discovery of German incendiary shells. The final paragraph of the report emphasised that Guernica had been defenceless.⁸² The paper's editorial reminded readers that other defenceless Basque towns had also been bombed and stressed that there was no direct military objective for any of these attacks, which were intended to terrify nearby Bilbao into surrender.⁸³ There was also frequent reiteration of protest at the unequal application of the non-intervention policy, and the need for the Spanish government to be able to trade normally.⁸⁴

Even though the *Times* did not publish all of the reports from its military correspondent, it did provide the most extensive and thorough coverage of the war. Its editorials were neutral, written in a tone that expressed regret at the situation but offered no solution.⁸⁵ One explained the Spanish situation as more complex than the conflict of what was loosely termed Fascists and Communists, and feared that a ruthless dictatorship was the likely outcome whichever side won.⁸⁶ Another article that also raised the spectre of dictatorship, while providing a balanced study of the background to the crisis in Spain, noted that 'terrorism had become rampant. It was practised by all classes...'⁸⁷ The *Times* did not shy away from reporting the burning of churches or the murder of priests, but neither did it sensationalise them.⁸⁸ A report of priests arrested and possibly wounded in an attempt to escape made clear that they

had been captured together with a group of rebel officers who had been using a machine-gun from the top of a church tower.⁸⁹ Editorials and reports referred to Government or Republican forces on one side and to rebels, insurgents or Nationalists on the other. There were references to savage and bitter fighting, and to summary executions on both sides.⁹⁰ Reports of the fighting in Spain were more detailed than other papers and remained neutral. The *Times* carried reports of reverses on both sides, and included Italian defeats and rumours of 'mutual distrust' between the nationalities making up the insurgent forces.⁹¹

Throughout the war the *Times* supported the British Government's policy of non-intervention, and was hopeful that negotiations would lead to the withdrawal of foreign participants.⁹² The *Telegraph* also expressed similar opinions, and both it, the *Times*, and the British Government accepted the insurgents' claims that the blockade of Bilbao was effective and that the harbour was mined and, therefore, too dangerous for British ships to enter, despite the Basque authorities' insistence that the harbour was safe.⁹³ There were, however, significant differences in the way papers reported the civil war in Spain. While the *Times* maintained a neutral tone in all its reports some of the *Telegraph's* reports were decidedly partisan. In particular, Pembroke Stephens, reporting from behind the Nationalist lines, wrote enthusiastically about Franco's troops who he claimed 'often resort to daring expedients when the circumstances warrant a risk.' They were also said to embark on 'hazardous missions with jokes and songs on their lips.'⁹⁴ When reporting casualties resulting from Nationalist advances the *Telegraph* adopted the technique of omitting agency. The deaths that resulted from Nationalist attacks were not generally ascribed directly to those responsible, for example one report from the Madrid front referred repeatedly to Government soldiers being 'found dead' and also to others being 'pursued by

machine-gun and rifle-fire and hand grenades.’ There was no mention of civilian casualties although the village, which was of little military value, had been heavily bombed. The same report made the agency explicit when describing ‘Government bombers ...killing and wounding many civilians, mostly women and children.’⁹⁵ The killing of civilians by Nationalist forces was rarely mentioned, appearing occasionally in an eyewitness report or a couple of sentences from Reuters.⁹⁶

The bombing of Guernica highlights the difference in coverage. A *Times* editorial began by describing it as a ‘tragic story – the pitiless bombardment of a country town...’ and continued by pointing out the lack of both resistance and military significance: ‘Its aim was unquestionably to terrorize the Basque Government into surrender by showing them what Bilbao may soon expect.’⁹⁷ An eyewitness account that spread over a column in length, described the deadly efficiency of the attack by German bombers and the fighter planes that machine-gunned those fleeing the bombing.⁹⁸ Although German and Insurgent denials of responsibility for the bombing of Guernica were reported, it was made clear that the denials were not credible, and attempts to blame Marxists or Bolsheviks for the bombing were refuted by eye-witness accounts and by the physical evidence of unexploded bombs of German manufacture.⁹⁹ The *Times* also made it clear that the bombing of Guernica was not unique; other non-military targets, such as Durango, where the two hundred dead included fourteen nuns who had been machine-gunned, were being bombed in an attempt to weaken the morale of the Basques.¹⁰⁰

The *Telegraph* had included a harrowing report by the Dean of Canterbury who had observed the bombing of Durango by German pilots and the machine-gunning of patients fleeing hospitals and a lunatic asylum by Italian-piloted pursuit planes. However, the *Telegraph*’s correspondents had little to say about Guernica.

Christopher Martin's report published on 28 April 1937, the day after the bombing, included a single sentence to the effect that Guernica had been bombed out of existence.¹⁰¹ Two days later Pembroke Stephens reporting from Guernica following its occupation by Franco's forces found an appalling spectacle of devastation, but did not mention any civilian casualties or what had caused the devastation.¹⁰² On the other hand, the *Telegraph* did publish a short eyewitness account by a Basque priest that described the machine-gunning of people in the streets and the dismembered corpses of old men, women and children.¹⁰³ Twice the *Telegraph* printed denials from Franco's HQ that the Nationalists had been responsible for the bombing without any comment, although elsewhere on the same page the denials were refuted, once by the Basque President and once by Reuters.¹⁰⁴

The popular press and the Spanish Civil War

The popular press was even more clearly divided over the Spanish Civil War than the quality press. The *Mail* denounced the war as a Moscow plot to further the creation of a Spanish Soviet Republic.¹⁰⁵ Its editorials, reports and articles always referred to the Nationalists as 'anti-Reds' and to the elected Republican Government and its supporters as 'Reds' thus reducing the conflict to a Manichean battle between good and evil.¹⁰⁶ According to the *Mail* the aim of the 'Reds' was to make Spain a vassal state of Soviet Russia. The Spanish right had combined to fight 'intolerable misgovernment' and to restore order; in the eyes of the *Mail* the cause of the 'anti-Reds' was an 'effort of liberation.'¹⁰⁷ General Franco was portrayed sympathetically and interviews with him were presented in a positive light.¹⁰⁸ One special correspondent, Harold G. Carozo, described feeling thrilled by the sight of Franco's 'Carlist companies marching ... with their red-gold banners at their head.'¹⁰⁹ This

was followed by a brief, but unusually picturesque, account of their involvement in the fighting around Durango. While Nationalist communiqués and announcements were reported in a factual and straightforward way, statements from the Republicans were regularly printed under the headline 'More tales from the Reds' accompanied by an introduction describing them as 'the latest propaganda from the Reds, which has proved so consistently to have been based on imagination.'¹¹⁰ A report that Germany was sending more warships to Spain was headlined 'Red terror causes grave anxiety.'¹¹¹ Much was made of allegations, not necessarily ill founded, that communists tortured and murdered priests and nuns, and more details were published than in the quality press or in the *Express*.¹¹² There were also frequent references to the burning of churches; again these allegations were not without some truth, but the *Mail's* coverage of this issue was more extensive and more heightened in tone than other papers.¹¹³

The *Mail's* position was made clear in an editorial relating to the aerial bombing of Durango and Eibar. Starting with the announcement that the 'Patriotic Government of General Franco will shortly be in control of the whole of Spain' the editorial attributed Franco's success to the 'bombing aeroplanes sent with decimating effect against the Red troops and their garrisons in the hills.'¹¹⁴ Despite the destruction of towns and villages and the high civilian casualties reported in other papers, Franco was portrayed as bringing 'food and succour to this suffering region.'¹¹⁵ The British Government was advised to avoid 'antagonising the Patriotic Government,' in particular there 'must be no appearance of interfering on behalf of the murderous barbarians who take their orders from Moscow.'¹¹⁶ However, the *Mail* did print a frank report of the bombing of Guernica, describing it as 'one of the most appalling air raids of modern warfare.'¹¹⁷ The killing of eight hundred civilians was

attributed to three and a half hours of bombing by German aeroplanes, and to hand grenades thrown by the crews of the German aeroplanes into the frightened crowds that had gathered for market day: 'Hundreds raced desperately for the fields, where they were systematically followed and machined-gunned from the air by swooping fighters.'¹¹⁸ The dead were reported to include fifty women and children incinerated when trapped in a bomb shelter. However, two days later, the fall of Guernica to General Mola's troops was reported without any comment on its destruction and the town was described as the 'key to Bilbao,' thus ascribing a military significance to Guernica that would justify its destruction. A photograph showing the ruins referred merely to a bombing raid, without attributing responsibility, and General Franco's claim that Guernica had been 'burned to ruins by the Red hordes ...' was printed without comment.¹¹⁹

The *Express* adopted a much more neutral stance, referring to the protagonists as the Republican Government and either the Fascist and monarchist rebels, or the insurgents.¹²⁰ The Republican Government's supporters were occasionally referred to as 'Red' in strap lines such as 'Red mob sprayed with machine-gun bullets.'¹²¹ Similarly some correspondents' reports also used the term, for example one informed readers that the Reds, who were said to be in full control in San Sebastian, included armed women, while another noted that the 'Red Militia fight grimly to save Madrid.'¹²² The *Express* was also more willing to print news potentially damaging to the Nationalists; reports described Fascist troops using machine-gun fire to clear communist crowds, and advancing Moors murdering everyone in their path.¹²³ Despite its more tolerant attitude towards the Republican cause the *Express* did not shy away from reporting the excesses of the Government's civilian forces, which it described as a combination of anarchists, communists and socialists. The burning of

churches and convents in Barcelona was reported but the tone of the reports was more factual and less heightened than those of the *Mail*.¹²⁴ The facts included in the *Express* coverage were the same as those in the *Mail*, but they were presented as human tragedy affecting both sides rather than justification for hating ‘Reds.’ In particular one report that described the killing of priests, by firing squads, and the mutilation of their bodies attempted to understand what was happening. The correspondent tried to explain, not just what had happened, but also some of the factors that had caused the terrible events. Unlike the *Mail*, which attributed the violence to the fact that the ‘Reds’ were ‘murderous barbarians’, this reporter showed awareness of the background to the violence and of the festering resentments that had been set free by the defeat of the Nationalist forces in the early weeks of the war. The depth of feeling unleashed had led to a situation where the ‘mob is uncontrollable and class hatred rules.’¹²⁵ The ‘executioners’ were described as men whose characters had been changed by the freedom of revolt. They were simple folk, sleep deprived, drunk on free liquor and in the grip of forces they could scarcely understand.¹²⁶ The *Express* did not seek to excuse what had been done, but tried to give readers some insight into how it had occurred.

Following the bombing of Guernica the *Express* was moved to abandon, briefly, its much-vaunted neutrality. Having reiterated claims of even-handedness the leader writer felt compelled to continue:

But there are some things that pass all bounds and cry for protest. The bombing of Guernica is one. The Basque people met in that place as devout Catholics to pray and give praise to God. They were not under arms. They were not the destroyers of churches or the murderers of priests or the ravishers of nuns. The insurgents have added a new word to the vocabulary of massacre – GUERNICA.¹²⁷

The reports of the bombing concentrated on the killing of the innocent, those machine-gunned as they tried to flee, women and children burned alive, nurses and patients killed in a Red Cross hospital, and an elderly priest blown up while trying to rescue children from a burning house.¹²⁸ Photographs of the ruins were published and the denials of the German propaganda ministry were refuted by three experienced, accredited, war correspondents who had witnessed German and Italian airplanes returning from Guernica:

There were thirty bombers of the heavy Junker 52 type and fifteen chasers of the Heinkel 51 type. There were also five Italian chasers. We newspapermen were machine-gunned for half an hour by Heinkel chasers near Guernica.¹²⁹

Also reported was the discovery of “dud” German incendiary bombs and Italian torpedo bombs. The editorial published on the same day mocked the denials of both Franco and the Germans.¹³⁰

The *Mirror*’s coverage of the war was largely couched in neutral tones, with the combatants generally being referred to as loyalists and rebels or insurgents.¹³¹ There was a slight bias against the rebels, one particular page contained two items relating to Spain. The first was a photograph showing the damage caused by ‘terror from the air’ after rebel planes bombed Bilbao killing an eleven year old French child, and the second an article about Franco’s arrival in Alcazar with a headline describing the waiting crowd as a mob.¹³² Nonetheless, ‘Red’ atrocities were also reported.¹³³ Editorial opinion supported the views of the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Winchester and was critical of the attempted overthrow of a constitutional government that had been legally elected.¹³⁴ Subsequent editorials criticised the involvement of the fascist powers in Spain, which had expanded the war to European dimensions and potentially threatened Britain’s interests, but remained adamant that the Government’s policy of non-intervention was correct.¹³⁵

Clearly the international situation coloured the reporting of the war. As Graves and Hodge note, most mainstream papers, even those that did not support the insurgents, were anxious not to offend Germany and Italy.¹³⁶ Yet, contrary to their assessment, the *Mirror* was critical of the fascist powers and mockingly referred to them as ‘gallant gentlemen’ and ‘nice boys’.¹³⁷ The *Manchester Guardian* was also notable for repeatedly pressing the Government to normalise trade relations with Spain’s democratically elected government, which was disadvantaged by the Government’s implementation of the non-intervention policy. Most striking, though, was the partisan coverage of the *Mail* with its focus on denigrating the Republicans and demonising anything connected with communism. In comparison the coverage of the *Express* appeared measured and, at times, insightful. Overall, there was little approval of the intervention of the Dictator states, even from those papers that supported the Nationalist cause.

The fascist press and the Spanish Civil War

The coverage of the war in the fascist press, while less extensive, was remarkably similar in tone to that of the *Mail*. *Blackshirt* carried headlines denouncing ‘the priest murderers of Spain’, claiming ‘they have burned, they have murdered, they have raped’ above allegations that young nuns were violated and thrown naked into the street while ‘older nuns and priests were tortured, shot or burned alive.’¹³⁸

William Joyce, in *Blackshirt*, supported the Rebel cause, not because it was fascist, but because it was anti-Bolshevik.¹³⁹ The BUF appeared keen to stress that fascism was only a small part of the revolt against the Spanish Government.¹⁴⁰ Joyce also complained that while the religious freedom of Jews was defended in Britain the ‘abominable atrocities which the Reds have perpetrated against ministers of religion,

their burning of Cathedrals and desecration of convents have evoked in Britain not one word of protest from the hypocrites who fly into panic when somebody calls attention to the predatory activities of the Jew.’¹⁴¹ A. K. Chesterton accused the Liberal and Labour press of failing to report alleged Red atrocities.¹⁴² The BUF press was keen to remedy this omission.¹⁴³ It also used the conflict in Spain to reinforce the message that Communism attacked Christianity.¹⁴⁴ The BUF’s endorsement of Franco and its denunciation of atrocities against the Catholic Church garnered significant Catholic support and also that of some right-wing Anglicans.¹⁴⁵ The combined efforts of Soviet Russia and Jewish influence to direct the Spanish Civil War, and the exploitation of British workers in the service of Moscow and ‘international finance’ were also recurring themes.¹⁴⁶

Coverage in *Action* concentrated on criticising mainstream reports of the war and frequently alleged that ‘Red’ atrocities went unreported.¹⁴⁷ The *Times*’ report of the bombing of Guernica was heavily criticised in an editorial in *Action* that insisted that the town was of strategic value and, therefore, a legitimate military target.¹⁴⁸ However, this argument was undermined by an earlier article in *Blackshirt* that suggested that the bombing of Guernica was a ‘Red ruse’ to gain sympathy as there was no military reason for Franco to bombard the village.¹⁴⁹ In the same month Chesterton insisted that Guernica had been set alight by Reds and had not been bombed by German warplanes. He went on to claim that if it had been bombed by the Nationalists it would have been ‘entirely justified.’¹⁵⁰ The claims that retreating communists were responsible for the devastation of Guernica were repeated regularly.¹⁵¹

Like the *Daily Mail*, the IFL was convinced that the Spanish Civil War was a battle between ‘Good and Evil’, or ‘gentile Fascism and Jewish Bolshevism.’¹⁵²

Although it was only intermittently expressed, their support for Franco and the 'Nationalists' was clear. In June 1937 congratulations were sent to Franco on the fall of Bilbao.¹⁵³ The following month the *Fascist* celebrated the heroism and sacrifice of General Moscardo and the 1600 inhabitants of the castle during the siege of Alcazar at Toledo.¹⁵⁴ Yet rather than reporting events, the *Fascist* was more concerned with warning readers of the supposed machinations of 'the Jewish Money Power' in Spain and its intent to drag Britain into conflict with the Fascist powers. Links were also made between the 'terrorism and blood shed' in Spain and that of the Russian revolution both of which were ascribed to Jewish influence.¹⁵⁵ H. H. L. accused the British Government of aiding 'Red Spain' by bringing Basque refugees to Britain and by permitting the press to 'work up a lying campaign against Franco.'¹⁵⁶ Having made no comment on the destruction of Guernica, Leese was quick to praise the bombing of Almeria, and used the incident to reinforce the message that the Jews were manipulating events in Spain.¹⁵⁷

The *Fascist* complained that the 'European newspaper reader has become hardened to the tales of Jewish Bolshevik mutilations, loppings, rippings and flaying', but hoped that some would be roused to action once they considered the fate of the children of executed Spanish Nationalists who were allegedly being sent abroad to Russia or Mexico to have their minds poisoned. The article went on to suggest that by accepting Basque children as refugees Britain was robbing Franco of potential hostages who could have been used to bargain for the return of 'these helpless innocents.'¹⁵⁸

CONCLUSION

The British fascist press consistently expressed anti-internationalist and anti-communist views, and denigrated and demonised the left in any way possible. There was to be no room for the Labour party in the Corporate State, and trade unions would be under state control. Yet, the fascist papers were careful not to portray the British working class as anything other than decent, patriotic and exploited. For the BUF, this was in line with their claim to transcend class differences and reflected their desire to claim the working class for fascism and the nation.

Mainstream attitudes to the left were noticeably at variance with those of the fascist papers. The national press remained committed to multi-party parliamentarism, and the day-to-day reporting of political events substantiates Worley's argument that the Labour Party had achieved recognition as a legitimate democratic political force. Except for coverage of general and municipal elections the mainstream press was notably less histrionic in its reporting of the political left-wing and there was no sustained effort to demonise or dehumanise socialism and communism when reporting British politics. Certainly, while the majority of the mainstream papers were hostile to communism, there was nothing in mainstream reporting to suggest that the Labour party was anything other than a legitimate parliamentary party. Reports of trade union activity did not indicate any substantive fear of revolutionary intent. Nor did the mainstream share the fascists' perception of communism as a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy bent on world domination.

However, the British fascist press' demonisation of the left in relation to the Spanish Civil War was very similar in content to that of the *Mail*, whose stance was, once again, closer than any other mainstream paper to that of the fascist press. Despite this there is no evidence that the *Mail*, or any of the other mainstream papers,

shared the fascists' perception that the war in Spain was the result of Jewish influence. Significantly, the majority of the mainstream papers did not adopt the one-sided, overwrought presentation found in the pages of the *Mail* and the fascist press. While there may have been occasional reports, more so in the *Mail*, that hinted at a convergence of opinion, the majority of the mainstream papers viewed the Labour party and trade unions as part of the mainstream: a substantially different position to that of the fascists, who advocated a one party corporate state.

¹ Martin Pugh, *We Danced All Night: A Social History of Britain Between the Wars* (Bodley Head, London 2008), pp. xi, & 87. The letter was a forgery that purported to be from the President of the Third International and urged the CPGB to incite the masses and dispense propaganda amongst the troops. Labour leaders were accused of betraying their class, and the letter looked forward to the revolutionising of the British proletariat. None of this appeared particularly damaging to the Labour party, but the Tory press, particularly the *Mail*, made much of the supposed 'Red Menace' and linked the communists and the Labour party. Robert Graves & Alan Hodge, *The Long Weekend* (Hutchinson, London, 1940), pp.157-8.

² Pugh, *We Danced*, pp. 90.

³ Matthew Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2005), pp. 8, 20, 38-9.

⁴ Roger Eatwell, *Fascism: A History* (Vintage, London, 1996), p. 4. Paul Hayes, *Fascism* (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1973), pp.63-76.

⁵ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (Routledge, London, 1991), p. 49.

⁶ Eatwell, p. 175.

⁷ Arnold Spenser Leese, *Out Of Step: Events In the Two Lives of an Anti-Jewish Camel-Doctor* (Arnold S. Leese, Guildford, 1947), p. 49.

⁸ *Fascist Bulletin*, 27 Jun 1925, p. 3.

⁹ For examples see *Fascist Bulletin*, 27 Jun 1925, p. 4; 11 Jul 1925, p. 1; 19 Sep 1925, p.1: & *British Fascism*, Jun 1934, p. 2.

¹⁰ Eatwell, p. 176.

¹¹ *Fascist*, Jul 1937, p. 6.

-
- ¹² *Fascist*, Apr 1934, p. 3. See also, Jun 1934, p. 1; Dec 1934, p. 6; Nov 1935, p. 1; Jul 1936, p. 4; Aug 1936, p. 3; Jun 1937, pp. 3 & 4; Oct 1937, p. 2; Apr 1938, p. 2; May 1938, pp. 1 & 2; Jul 1938, p. 3.
- ¹³ *Action*, 19 Mar 1936, p. 3.
- ¹⁴ *Blackshirt*, 1 Aug 1936, p. 3. *Action* 11 Jun 1936, p. 10; 25 Jun 1938, p. 11; & 16 Jul 1938, p. 18.
- ¹⁵ *Action*, 3 Sep 1936 p. 9. Similar denunciations of the evils of Communism were frequent, for examples see *Blackshirt* 2 May 1936, p. 1.
- ¹⁶ *Blackshirt*, 9 Nov 1934, p. 11. See also claims by Anne Brock-Griggs that international socialism was ‘the instrument of Jewish Usury’ and would lead to British workers being exploited and women becoming slaves, *Blackshirt* 25 Apr 1936, p. 5 & 2 May 1936, p. 7. Other articles linking Communism with ‘Jewish Finance’ include *Blackshirt*, 2 May 1936, p. 5.
- ¹⁷ *Blackshirt*, Mar 1933, p. 3; 17 Apr 1933, pp. 2 & 4; 1 May 1933, p. 4; 24 Jun 1933, p. 4; 1 Jul 1933, p. 1; 3 Aug 1934, p. 8. *Action*, 12 Feb 1938, p. 17; 26 Feb 1938, p. 17; 7 May 1938, p. 16, 17 Dec 1938, p. 17; & 27 May 1939, p. 17.
- ¹⁸ *Action*, 23 Jan 1937, p. 2.
- ¹⁹ *Action*, 30 Dec 1937, p. 12.
- ²⁰ *Blackshirt*, 25 Apr 1936, p. 8
- ²¹ *Action*, 23 Jan 1937, p. 2.
- ²² *Action*, 21 Aug 1937, p. 10.
- ²³ *Blackshirt*, 20 Feb 1937, p. 1.
- ²⁴ *Action*, 26 Mar 1936, p. 12.
- ²⁵ *Blackshirt*, 16 Jun 1933, p. 1; 31 Jan 1936, p. 5.
- ²⁶ *Blackshirt*, 11 Apr 1936, p. 3.
- ²⁷ *Blackshirt*, 2 May 1936, p. 3; 3 Jan 1936, p. 5; & 27 Jun 1936, p. 3.
- ²⁸ *Action*, 28 Feb 1936, p. 12. The column began on 21 February 1936, and continued to 23 April 1936, after which it was re-titled ‘The World of Labour’. Emery’s by-line continued to appear in *Action* up to 8 July 1939. The first four columns also appeared in *Blackshirt* from 21 January 1936, p. 6, to 12 March 1936, p. 4, when they were replaced by ‘Work and Wages’ on 21 March 1936, p. 2, edited by O. Auton from 28 March 1936, p. 3 to 25 Apr 1936, p. 3, after which the column reverted to the original title of ‘Industrial Notes’, though still edited by Auton.

-
- ²⁹ *Blackshirt*, 16 Nov 1934, p. 8.
- ³⁰ *Blackshirt*, 3 Aug 1934, p. 4.
- ³¹ Henry Pelling, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (Macmillan, London, 1972, 4th edn), p. 8.
- ³² *Mail*, 3 Feb 1934, p. 11; & 8 Feb 1934, p. 13. *Express*, 1 Feb 1934, pp. 2 & 8; 2 Feb 1934, p. 2, 3 Feb 1934, pp. 1 & 2; 5 Feb 1934, p. 1; 6 Feb 1934, pp. 1 & 2; 12 Feb 1934, p. 2; 14 Feb 1934, pp. 1 & 2; & 9 Mar 1934, p. 6.
- ³³ *Express*, 18 Aug 1932, p. 7; 22 Feb 1933, p. 10; 1 May 1933, p. 11; 2 May 1933, p. 11; 6 Feb 1934, pp. 2 & 4; 8 Feb 1934, p. 10; 10 Feb 1934, pp. 1 & 2; 13 Feb 1934, p. 9; 14 Feb 1934, pp. 1 & 2; 16 Feb 1934, p. 11; 21 Feb 1934, p. 2; 22 Feb 1934, p. 2; & 24 Feb 1934, pp. 1 & 2. *Mail*, 28 Feb 1933, p. 13; 1 Feb 1934, p. 12; 2 Feb 1934, p. 10; 1 Mar 1934, p. 16.
- ³⁴ *Express*, 1 Feb 1934, p. 2; 7 Feb 1934, pp. 1 & 2; 8 Feb 1934, p. 1; 9 Feb 1934, p. 10; 14 Feb 1934, pp. 1 & 2. *Mail*, 2 Feb 1934, p. 11; 5 Feb 1934, pp. 10 & 13; & 1 Mar 1934, p. 16.
- ³⁵ Worley, pp. 8 & 20.
- ³⁶ *Express*, 2 May 1929, p. 10.
- ³⁷ *Mail*, 1 May 1929, p. 10.
- ³⁸ *Mail*, 23 May 1929, p. 10.
- ³⁹ *Mail*, 30 May 1929, p. 10.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid
- ⁴¹ *Express*, 23 May 1929, p. 8.
- ⁴² *Mail*, 8 Mar 1934, p. 12.
- ⁴³ *Express* 8 Mar 1933, p. 12.
- ⁴⁴ *Express*, 8 Mar 1934, pp. 1 & 2. There were also headlines describing the socialists as ‘wreckers’ and alleging that they bawled “Red” songs and prevented free speech.
- ⁴⁵ *Blackshirt*, 1-22 Mar 1934, p. 1.
- ⁴⁶ *Mirror*, 6 Mar 1934, p. 13.
- ⁴⁷ *Mirror*, 9 Mar 1934, p. 2. *Express* 9 Mar 1934, p. 1.
- ⁴⁸ *Express*, 10 Mar 1934, p. 10.
- ⁴⁹ *Telegraph*, 29 May 1929, p. 10. *Times*, 29 May 1929, p. 15.
- ⁵⁰ *Times*, 30 May 1929, p. 15.

-
- ⁵¹ *Times*, 5 Mar 1934, p. 12. See also 7 Mar 1934, p.11 & 8 Mar 1934, p. 12 for similar coverage.
- ⁵² *Times*, 8 Mar 1934, p. 13.
- ⁵³ *Telegraph*, 31 Oct 1935, p. 14.
- ⁵⁴ *Telegraph*, 2 Feb 1934, p. 7; & 22 Feb 1934, p. 12.
- ⁵⁵ *Times*, 10 Mar 1934, p. 13.
- ⁵⁶ *Fascist*, May 1933, p. 1; & Apr 1934, p. 1.
- ⁵⁷ *Fascist*, Apr 1934, p. 1.
- ⁵⁸ *Action*, 20 Aug 1938, p. 3. *Blackshirt* 1 Jun 1934, p. 2; 24 Jan 1936, p. 3; & 20 Jun 1936, p. 3.
- ⁵⁹ *Action*, 10 Apr 1937, p. 15.
- ⁶⁰ *Action*, 24 Apr 1937, p. 10.
- ⁶¹ Brian Shelmerdine, *British Representations of the Spanish Civil War* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2006), p. 177.
- ⁶² Shelmerdine, pp. 149-53, & 172-5.
- ⁶³ Charles Loch Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940* (Methuen & Co, London, 1955, p. 577; & A. J. P. Taylor, *England 1914-1945* (The Folio Society, London, 2000), p. 345.
- ⁶⁴ Paul Preston, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (Fontana Press, London, 1996), p. 102.
- ⁶⁵ Martin Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1982), pp. 241-2, & 288.
- ⁶⁶ Tom Buchanan, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), pp. 3 & 36. Shelsmerdine, p. 4.
- ⁶⁷ See next chapter for more details.
- ⁶⁸ Preston, pp. 99-100.
- ⁶⁹ Buchanan, pp. 37-8.
- ⁷⁰ Douglas Little, 'Britain and the Spanish Civil War', *The Journal of Modern History* vol. 71, no. 4 (December, 1999), p. 940.
- ⁷¹ Preston, p. 101; Little, p. 490.
- ⁷² Taylor, *England*, p.345.
- ⁷³ Graves & Hodge, pp. 336-7.
- ⁷⁴ *Observer*, 3 Jan 1937, pp 15 & 19.

-
- ⁷⁵ *Observer*, 9 Aug 1936, p. 10.
- ⁷⁶ *Observer*, 2 May 1937, p. 20.
- ⁷⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 3 Aug 1936, p. 8.
- ⁷⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 20 Aug 1936, p. 8.
- ⁷⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 8 Aug 1936, p. 10; 12 Aug 1936, p. 8; 17 Aug 1936, p. 8.
- ⁸⁰ *Manchester Guardian*, 2 Jan 1937, pp. 9 & 10.
- ⁸¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Jan 1937, pp. 9 & 10. Crossley also claimed that, although there had been some looting, the Moorish soldiers were now under control and were great respecters of other men's wives and very popular with Spanish children.
- ⁸² See *Manchester Guardian*, 28 Apr 1937, p. 11 for a report of the Basque Government's account of the bombing. The Basques believed that in order to force a surrender while keeping Bilbao's profitable industry intact the rebels were bombing undefended villages and towns, see also 29 Apr 1937, p. 6.
- ⁸³ *Manchester Guardian*, 29 Apr 1937, p. 10. Similarly, see 5 May 1937, p. 10; & 7 May 1937, p. 10.
- ⁸⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 29 Apr 1937, p. 10; 21 May 1937, p. 10; & 29 May, p. 12.
- ⁸⁵ See for example see, *Times*, 21 Jul 1936, p. 17.
- ⁸⁶ *Times*, 29 Jul 1937, p.13.
- ⁸⁷ *Times*, 21 Jul 1936, p. 15.
- ⁸⁸ For example see *Times*, 23 Jul 1936, pp 16 & 18; 24 Jul 1936, p. 14; & 31 Jul 1937, p.13.
- ⁸⁹ *Times*, 24 Jul 1936, p. 14.
- ⁹⁰ *Times*, 22 Jul 1936, p. 16; 23 Jul 1936, p. 16; 29 Jul 1936, p. 12; & 3 Apr 1937, p. 13.
- ⁹¹ *Times*, 23 Apr 1937, p. 15.
- ⁹² For example see *Times*, 13 Apr 1937, p. 17; 15 Apr 1937, p. 17; 19 Apr 1937, p. 15, & 28 Apr 1937, p.17.
- ⁹³ *Telegraph*, 15 Apr 1937, p. 16; 19 Apr 1937, p. 12; & 7 Jul 1937, p.16. *Times*, 13 Apr 1937, p. 17.
- ⁹⁴ *Telegraph*, 29 Apr 1937, p. 17.
- ⁹⁵ *Telegraph*, 26 Jul 1937, p. 11.
- ⁹⁶ *Telegraph*, 30 Apr 1937, pp. 17 & 18.

-
- ⁹⁷ *Times*, 28 Apr 1937, p. 17.
- ⁹⁸ *Times*, 28 Apr 1937, pp 17-18.
- ⁹⁹ *Times*, 29 Apr 1937, pp. 15 & 16; 30 Apr 1937, p. 16.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Times*, 30 Apr 1937, p. 16.
- ¹⁰¹ *Telegraph*, 28 Apr 1937, p. 17.
- ¹⁰² *Telegraph*, 30 Apr 1937, p. 17.
- ¹⁰³ *Telegraph*, 30 Apr 1937, pp. 17 & 18.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Telegraph*, 29 Apr 1937, p. 17; & 30 Apr 1937, p. 18.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Mail*, 30 Jul 1936, p. 10.
- ¹⁰⁶ For example see *Mail*, 20 Jul 1936, p. 10; 24 Jul 1937, p. 12; 30 Jul 1937, p. 8; 2 Apr 1937, p. 14; 3 Apr 1937, p. 13; & 6 Apr 1937, p. 9.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Mail*, 20 Jul 1936, p. 10.
- ¹⁰⁸ For example see *Mail*, 27 Jul 1936, pp 11 & 12. Also *Mail*, 24 Apr 1937, pp. 13 & 14; an interview by Sir Randolph Churchill, who addressed Franco as your excellency, showed him in a flattering light, and accepted his version of events as fact. Churchill was acting as a special correspondent for the *Mail*, other pro- Franco reports included; *Mail*, 12 Apr 1937, p. 14; & 21 Apr 1937, p. 16.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Mail*, 9 Apr 1937, p. 13. The Carlists were an extreme right-wing Catholic party who disputed the right of Alfonso XIII to the throne and supported the claim of another branch of the Bourbons descended from Don Carlos.
- ¹¹⁰ For examples see *Mail*, 12 Apr 1937, p. 14; 15 Apr 1937, p. 14; 22 Apr 1937, p. 9; 23 Apr 1937, p. 14; & 30 Apr 1937, p. 14.
- ¹¹¹ *Mail*, 28 Jul 1936, p. 9.
- ¹¹² Examples include: *Mail*, 27 Jul 1933, p. 12; & 30 Jul 1937, p. 10.
- ¹¹³ For example see an article by Francis Tuohy 'The women who burn churches SPAIN'S RED CARMENS' *Mail*, 27 Apr 1936, p. 10; also 30 Jul 1936, p. 8.
- ¹¹⁴ *Mail*, 26 Apr 1937, p. 12.
- ¹¹⁵ *Mail*, 26 Apr 1937, p. 12.
- ¹¹⁶ *Mail*, 26 Apr 1937, p. 12.
- ¹¹⁷ *Mail*, 28 Apr 1937, p. 13.
- ¹¹⁸ *Mail*, 28 Apr 1937, p. 13.
- ¹¹⁹ *Mail*, 30 Apr 1937, p. 14.

-
- ¹²⁰ For examples see *Express*, 20 Jul 1936, p. 1; 21 Jul 1936, p. 1; 23 Jul 1936, pp. 1 & 2; 2 Apr 1937, p. 2; & 10 Apr 1937, p. 2.
- ¹²¹ *Express*, 20 Jul 1936, p. 2.
- ¹²² *Express*, 24 Jul 1936, p. 2; & 24 Jul 1937, p.1.
- ¹²³ *Express* 20 Jul 1936, p. 2; & 22 Jul 1936, p. 1.
- ¹²⁴ *Express*, 23 Jul 1936, p. 2.
- ¹²⁵ *Express*, 27 Jul 1936, p. 1.
- ¹²⁶ *Express*, 27 Jul 1936, pp. 1 & 2.
- ¹²⁷ *Express*, 28 Apr 1937, p. 12.
- ¹²⁸ *Express*, 28 Apr 1937, p. 2.
- ¹²⁹ *Express*, 29 Apr 1937, p. 2.
- ¹³⁰ *Express*, 29 Apr 1937, p. 12.
- ¹³¹ For example see: *Mirror*, 13 Oct 1936, p. 3; 2 Apr 1937, p. 1; 5 Apr 1937, p.2; & 8 Apr 1937, p. 1.
- ¹³² *Mirror*, 1 Oct 1936, p. 32.
- ¹³³ *Mirror*, 5 Oct 1936, p. 32.
- ¹³⁴ *Mirror*, 1 Oct 1936, p. 13.
- ¹³⁵ *Mirror*, 9 Oct 1936, p. 15; 27 Oct 1936, p. 13; 13 Nov 1936, p. 13; 24 Nov 1936, p. 13; 30 Nov 1936, p. 13; 2 Dec 1936, p. 13; 29 Dec 1936, p. 9; 6 Jan 1937, p. 11; 19 Apr 1937, p. 13; & 24 May 1937, p. 11.
- ¹³⁶ Graves & Hodge, pp. 336-7.
- ¹³⁷ *Mirror*, 15 Apr 1937, p. 15; & 28 Apr 1937, p. 11.
- ¹³⁸ *Blackshirt*, 8 Aug 1936, pp.1 & 5. See also *Blackshirt* 15 Aug 1936, p. 4 & 6; 22 Aug 1936, p. 4; 29 Aug 1936, p. 1; 29 Aug 1936, p. 5. Allegations that similar atrocities had been committed during rioting two years earlier were printed in *Blackshirt*, 23 May 1936, p. 2.
- ¹³⁹ *Blackshirt*, 1 Aug 1936, p.2.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Blackshirt*, 22 Aug 1936, p.4.
- ¹⁴¹ *Blackshirt*, 1 Aug 1936, p.2.
- ¹⁴² *Blackshirt*, 22 Aug 1936, p.1.
- ¹⁴³ *Blackshirt*, 1 Aug 1936, p.4; 29 Aug 1936, p. 4.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Blackshirt*, 8 Aug 1936, p.1 & 5; 22 Aug 1936, p. 1; 29 Aug 1936, p. 1.
- ¹⁴⁵ Linehan, p.166. *Action*, 8 May 1937, p. 3; 13 Mar 1938, p. 11.

-
- ¹⁴⁶ *Blackshirt*, 16 Jan 1937, p. 5; 23 Jan 1937, pp. 1, 3 7 4; 6 Mar 1937, p.4.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Action*, 29 May, p. 7; 12 Jun 1937, p.16.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Action*, 22 May 1937, p. 8.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Blackshirt*, 1 May 1937, p.3.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Action*, 29 May 1937, p.3.
- ¹⁵¹ Capt Gordon-Canning, Clement Bruning, George Sutton and Major-General J. F. C. Fuller all repeated the claim that Guernica was burned by ‘Reds’, see *Action*, 26 Jun 1937, p. 6; 4 Sept 1937, p. .3; & 30 Oct 1937, p. 19; & 6 Nov 1937, p. 3.
- ¹⁵² *Fascist*, Sep 1936, p. 2.
- ¹⁵³ *Fascist*, Aug 1937, p. 1. See also Mar 1938, p. 3
- ¹⁵⁴ *Fascist*, Jul 1937, pp. 1, 5 & 6.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Fascist*, Aug 1936, p.1; Sep 1936, p. 2; Apr 1937, p. 1; & May 1937, p. 8.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Fascist*, Jul 1937, p. 1.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Fascist*, Jul 1937, p. 5.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Fascist*, Jul 1937, p. 6. Objections to the presence of the Basque children in Britain were also expressed in *Fascist* Sep 1937, p. 3.

MINDING BRITAIN'S BUSINESS

If G. C. Webber's analysis of BUF membership statistics is correct, the late 1930s witnessed an appreciable rise in BUF membership; one that coincided with, and arguably was aided by, the promotion of the BUF's revived peace campaign.¹ Deploying slogans such as 'Britain First', 'Mind Britain's Business' and 'Britons fight for Britons only' the BUF were attempting to counter what they perceived as 'war-mongering,' 'international finance' and 'old gang' politicians.² The campaign culminated in what was at the time the world's largest indoor meeting, held at Earls Court on 16 July 1939.³ According to Webber, BUF membership stood at 22,500 in September 1939. This represented a significant increase in popularity for the BUF over the four years since October 1935 when the membership was estimated to have fallen to around 5,000.⁴

At the time, the British Government was pursuing a policy of appeasement, which was markedly similar to the foreign policy advocated by Mosley and the BUF. Martin Pugh points out that this made it more difficult for the BUF to criticise the Government's policy; even so Mosley believed that the movement would gain respectability and recruits from this apparent convergence with mainstream opinion and he continued to consolidate the movement's links with mainstream Conservative politics.⁵ Conversely, D. S. Lewis has claimed that the foreign policy of the BUF 'outlined a clear and consistent alternative to that which was pursued by the British government.'⁶ Alternatively, G. C. Webber has described Mosley's foreign policy as subject to change in three significant areas: the League of Nations, the roles of Britain and Germany on the world stage, and the underlying cause of war.⁷

International relations are complex and often conducted in secrecy and on several fronts concurrently. This was particularly true of the period between the wars, despite the principles of open diplomacy and collective security on which the League of Nations was founded.

This chapter will analyse the contradictory arguments mentioned above and examine the extent to which the foreign policy of the British fascists can be seen as part of the mainstream. Firstly, having established the Government's position, the response of the inter-war British fascist press pertaining to British foreign policy and international events will be compared with that of mainstream publications. With regard to fascist publications, attention will focus on the BUF since it offered a proactive and coherent foreign policy as opposed to the more reactive stance of the IFL, which largely responded to events as they occurred.

Secondly, it will be suggested that while the BUF's foreign policy may have been consistent in the sense that it was coherent and logically expressed, it was clearly predicated on a perception of the world that became increasingly divorced from reality. The research informing the chapter will question Lewis' assessment that the BUF offered a distinctive alternative to the policy of the Government when faced with actual events. In tandem with this it will be shown that where the BUF did advocate an alternative policy to that pursued by the Government it was not original or unique. Indeed, as both Neil Nugent and Webber have shown, other right-wing groups had also advocated similar courses of action.⁸

Finally, similarities and disparities with the mainstream press will be analysed demonstrating considerable discursive overlap between Tory elements of the popular press and the BUF in relation to the League of Nations, the Empire, and appeasement. This degree of agreement points to a convergence with the mainstream over certain

foreign policy issues. In order to clarify the extent of this convergence the analysis of the relevant issues is divided into three separate sections. The first discusses the British Government's foreign policy in relation to the League of Nations, the Empire, Italy and Abyssinia, and Germany and appeasement. The second critically examines the policy of the BUF with regard to the above topics, and the third analyses the response of the mainstream press.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT FOREIGN POLICY

The League of Nations

In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, the most pressing area of foreign policy for the British Government was the implementation of the peace settlement, especially the setting up of the League of Nations. The League was intended as a mechanism for preventing future wars, though the refusal of the USA to join undermined its credibility and effectiveness.

In Britain, however, there was a general belief that the League represented the best hope of maintaining a workable peace. Despite this there were those, in all parties, who opposed the influence of the League. The dissenters included some right-wing Conservatives who regarded it as a threat to British sovereignty.⁹ Without doubt the potency of the League was diminished by the absence of the USA, and the withdrawal of Japan and Germany in 1933 damaged it further. Even so, it had achieved some success that year in opposing the implementation of Nazi decrees discriminating against Jews in Upper Silesia, and in aiding Assyrian Christians in Iraq; the settlement of the 1935 Yugoslav-Hungary dispute was also a notable achievement.¹⁰

In addition, the League was popular with the British public, and popular opinion was very much in favour of avoiding another war, though not at all costs, as

was shown by the peace ballot. This ballot, organised by the League of Nations Union in 1935, demonstrated clear public support for the League. More than 10,000,000 people voted in favour of sanctions against aggressor countries and 6,750,000 voted for military sanctions if necessary.¹¹

The Empire

Although the intrinsicity of Great Britain and her role as an imperial power were controversial issues before the First World War, during the inter-war period they were overshadowed by Britain's economic difficulties and concern over events in Europe. Policies relating to Southern and Northern Ireland, Egyptian nationalism, the question of self-rule for India, and the definition of dominion status continued to be discussed and developed, but these issues had a much lower public profile in the late 1920s and the 1930s than they had prior to the First World War. There was cross-party consensus regarding the need for imperial reform, no doubt given impetus by the post-war popularity of the concept of self-determination and the economic cost of maintaining the Empire.¹² Niall Ferguson argues that a crisis of confidence gradually developed amongst the traditional imperial elite, caused by the devastating loss of manpower in the First World War and its huge economic cost. Britain had lost 750,000 men, a sixteenth of the adult male population aged between fifteen and fifty. The national debt had increased by a factor of ten and the Government, faced with domestic economic difficulties, was reluctant to invest in the Empire.¹³

Nonetheless, there was a vocal minority, the most notable among them being Sir Winston Churchill, who vehemently opposed the Government's gradual dilution of imperial power.¹⁴ But even Churchill, when Chancellor in 1929, had been reluctant to divert funds to the Empire.¹⁵

In 1921 the Irish Treaty had been signed, giving Southern Ireland dominion status.¹⁶ Also that year, negotiations began to find a form of independence for Egypt that would safeguard British interests, particularly in relation to the Suez Canal. These would not be successfully concluded until 1936.¹⁷ The Government's proposals for a new constitution for India were set out in a White Paper issued on 17 March 1933.¹⁸ After lengthy and sometimes heated debate the Government of India Act received royal assent in 1935 providing a limited form of self-government at the provincial level.¹⁹ Churchill described the Act as 'a surrender to incompetent extremists.'²⁰ This was a view shared by the *Mail* and also by Britain's fascists.

Britain, Italy and Abyssinia

That the League's reputation was badly damaged by its handling of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in October 1935 is clear, indeed A. J. P. Taylor declared that the League died with the Hoare-Laval pact.²¹ The British Government's response to the crisis, which Pugh has described as duplicitous, was a significant factor in the League's failure.²² In public, Britain took a strong stance in support of the League and against the Italian invasion; Sir Samuel Hoare, the foreign secretary, spoke robustly in favour of economic sanctions against Italy, and these were imposed. Behind the scenes Britain and France, anxious not to alienate Italy and risk, losing a potential ally had negotiated an agreement that would satisfy Italian demands. According to Mowat, when the details of the Hoare-Laval pact were leaked there was a public outcry and most of the press, with the noticeable exception of those papers owned by Beaverbrook and Rothermere, condemned the pact.²³

However, this is an overstatement of the events. Hoare's visit to Laval had been discussed in the press for several days prior to the publishing of the terms of the

proposed pact and press speculation regarding the terms was pretty close to the mark. As Mowat notes, the *Express* and *Mail* supported the pact, but, the *Times* was not entirely critical, recognising that the proposals were merely the basis for negotiation.²⁴ Both the *Times* and the *Mail* pointed out that the League had mandated the French and British Governments to seek grounds for conciliation.²⁵ Nonetheless, there was considerable public opposition to a settlement that partitioned Abyssinia, thereby substantially rewarding the aggressor nation, and the Cabinet withdrew its support for Hoare. He was forced to resign and was replaced by Anthony Eden. Despite the furore over the Hoare-Laval pact, once Italy had defeated the Abyssinian forces the outcome was accepted, and sanctions were lifted in 1936.²⁶

The imposition of sanctions against Italy failed to prevent the conquest of Abyssinia and, therefore, weakened belief in the process of collective security and strengthened arguments that the League was ineffective. While the British Government insisted that it continued to support the League and its principles it also claimed the right to act independently or in conjunction with others, notably France, to resolve issues it considered within its purview. Neville Chamberlain justified this strategy on the grounds that the League was unable to act effectively in carrying out some of the functions it was created to undertake and, therefore, the Government was obliged to deal with the reality of the situation.²⁷ Chamberlain's strategy of appeasement took its first, faltering steps in an attempt to reach a rapprochement with Italy, but Germany rapidly became the main focus of attention.

Britain and Germany

Two factors appear to have influenced the attitudes of successive British Governments to Nazi Germany. The first is that, although Britain had supported

France over the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, these were increasingly perceived as being punitive. The National Government, led by Ramsay MacDonald, supported the end of reparations payments by Germany and regarded French delaying tactics as a threat to European peace.²⁸ The Government was also concerned by the French rejection of the disarmament proposals that Anthony Eden had devised to meet Hitler's demands for equality in armaments.²⁹ Seen in this light the German re-occupation of the Rhineland, despite being a violation of the treaty, was condoned by many, including the *Times*, as redressing a legitimate grievance.³⁰ While there was a widespread acceptance that Germany had been badly treated there were also concerns about the nature of the Nazi regime.

The second factor has already been mentioned in the previous chapter in connection with the policy of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War: the fear of a war involving the European powers. This was the driving force behind the Government's espousal of non-intervention, though its application of the policy prevented the Spanish Government from buying arms from British suppliers while Franco received supplies of men and armaments from both Germany and Italy.³¹

In retrospect the policy of appeasement has been heavily criticised.³² However, strategically, Britain was not ready to fight another war and, economically, could not afford the costs of rapid rearmament. Thurlow argues that Britain was also influenced by the reluctance of the Dominions to become entangled in a European conflict.³³ Mowat, in contrast, denounces appeasement as being against Britain's real interests and ignoring the moral issues. He suggests that war was not the certain outcome of any alternative to appeasement, but fails to provide any details of the alternatives.³⁴ Alternative outcomes are a matter of speculation. What is certain is

that after the carnage of the Great War there was a widespread and profound reluctance to engage in another conflict of the European powers if it could be avoided.

The strategy was well received in both the Tory quality and popular press, though it had less appeal for the liberal and left-wing papers. The Government's policy of appeasement suited the public mood. The Munich Agreement was, initially, very popular with both the press and the public and it was not until Germany invaded rump Czechoslovakia that popular support for appeasement waned.

FASCIST FOREIGN POLICY

British fascists and the League of Nations

After the war Mosley was a supporter of the League of Nations seeing it as a well conceived mechanism for keeping and, if necessary, enforcing the peace by international action.³⁵ In 1920 Mosley became secretary to the League of Nations Union, but by 1923, following the League's failure to take economic and military sanctions against Italy for its occupation of Corfu he was disillusioned and began to talk of withdrawal from the League and an isolationist Britain.³⁶ Although Mosley had lost faith in the League long before he embraced fascism, the policy of the BUF, initially, was one of reform rather than rejection. Mosley maintained that the League was ineffective, futile and dangerous. Despite this, he claimed that fascism would transform it and use it for 'different purposes' that supported British interests.³⁷ He did not give explicit details of how this would be achieved or how he imagined other nations would react to this transformation, but a clue to his thinking is apparent in his statement in the June 1935 edition of *Blackshirt* that nations that were 'competent to lead must give leadership ...'³⁸ He appeared to envisage a two tier League, in which the European powers, united in Fascism, decided the fate of 'the backward and

uncivilised nations of the earth...'³⁹ By 1936, Mosley rejected any possibility of reform and advocated direct links between what he anticipated as being the fascist governments of Britain, France, Germany and Italy.⁴⁰ The BUF clearly considered that the League was being used as a mechanism for maintaining the dominant position of the democratic powers and, therefore, regarded it as inimical to the growth of fascist states. Writing in *Action* in August 1937, Raven Thomson described it as a manifestation of misguided idealism exploited by the colonial powers to maintain the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles.⁴¹ 'Misguided' was also the term used to describe the League of Nations Union and the peace ballot.⁴²

The *Fascist* generally went further than other publications in its assertions that the League was controlled by Jews, claiming that the 'League of Nations is of course run by the central banks of the Big Powers; that is to say, by the Jews of France and the U.S.A.'⁴³ Similar views were expressed in a letter to *Action* by the poet Ezra Pound when he declared that the League was a 'shop front for Basel and international usury' and by E. D. Hart, who argued that 'international finance' had 'bought it up lock, stock and barrel.'⁴⁴ The IFL also shared more general fascist attitudes to the League. Leese contended that 'as long as it survives in its present form it is a constant source of danger to this country ...' and berated its 'utter futility and incompetence.'⁴⁵

Fascists and Empire

The BUF's policy in relation to the Empire was predicated on the need to keep the Empire intact to service its economic policy of autarchy within the Empire, and to provide military support and raw materials for a fascist Britain that would be isolated from Europe.⁴⁶ Mosley and the BUF continued to advocate Empire autarchy throughout the 1930s.⁴⁷ This policy was comparable in several respects to that of a

number of right-wing groups during the inter-war period. Citing the work of Bernard Semmel, Neil Nugent has pointed to the similarities between the policies of the BUF in relation to empire autarchy and those of British social imperialists, most notably the Tariff Reform League (TRL) founded by Joseph Chamberlain.⁴⁸ Semmel notes that TRL propaganda stressed the need for ‘protection from the self-seeking destructive foreigner’ and advocated ‘British work for British Workers.’⁴⁹ The TRL rhetoric would surely have had resonance for the BUF, as would its allegations of foreign goods being ‘dumped’ on the British market. Similarly the BUF would recognise a kindred spirit in the TRL’s ambition to wean the working class away from socialism.⁵⁰ Webber’s analysis of right-wing thinking on nationalism and imperialism from 1918 to 1939, also makes clear the analogy between BUF policy and that of imperial isolationists and right-wing supra-nationalists.⁵¹

The mantra of the BUF was ‘buy from those who buy from Britain’, and their policy was to exclude foreign foodstuffs and to buy exclusively from Empire sources, which would eliminate the need for the imposition of tariffs or quotas.⁵² Consequently they were vehemently opposed to the Government’s India Bill, which they regarded as emblematic of a surrender of British pride and pre-eminence.⁵³ In a speech at the Albert Hall, Mosley accused the Government of surrendering both the Empire and Britain’s position in the world. He argued that India owed a debt to Britain, and that Britain had a moral obligation to govern. He claimed a fascist government would not allow tariffs against British goods and would prevent the development of an industrial infrastructure in India.⁵⁴ In furtherance of its economic aims the BUF already advocated the forcible reassertion of British authority in India and the suppression of opposition to British exploitation anywhere in the colonies.⁵⁵ As early as June 1933, Joyce had promised that a fascist government would liquidate

what he claimed was the ‘fake movement’ of seditious nationalism which, he alleged, benefited only the parasites of the political class. He made plain that those who financed it would be made to answer with their lives and property, and ‘the whole framework of pseudo-parliamentary government [would] be swept away.’⁵⁶ An example of the methods the BUF intended to use appeared later that month in the ‘Special RAF Pageant’ issue of the *Blackshirt*, which advocated the bombing of rebel villages in remote districts as a humane and effective method of maintaining order in the Empire.⁵⁷ The article disparaged any condemnation of the practice and claimed that there was no evidence that women and children had ever been killed in such a raid as prior warning was invariably given.

The BUF was convinced that Britain had a right and a duty to govern India and would not countenance its surrender.⁵⁸ In January 1935, Mosley, speaking at Burnley, claimed it was the corrupt influence of international finance, and not the Indian peoples, who were demanding self-government.⁵⁹ With the passing of the 1935 India Act imminent, Joyce admitted it was too late to halt the surrender of India, but pledged that a fascist government would re-capture India, close the Indian cotton mills and punish the traitors.⁶⁰

This ruthless, bullying attitude was also to be applied to other parts of the Empire; opposition was to be suppressed, and the needs of Britain would take precedence over those of the inhabitants of the colonies whose land and property would be liable to seizure if a fascist government deemed it in Britain’s interests.⁶¹ It is unlikely that the BUF’s admittedly brutal policies on the suppression of opposition and the exploitation of colonial resources would engender much long term public support given the way that the popularity of General Dyer plummeted once the details of the 1919 Amritsar massacre became public.⁶²

International acquiescence to the BUF's foreign policy was to be ensured by allowing Italy to develop an empire in Africa, Japan to exploit Northern China, and Germany to expand eastwards. Thus, according to Mosley, fascism would ensure the peace of the world and bring tranquillity to India as '[n]othing but the will of man is necessary to raise India from the depths to the heights.'⁶³

The IFL also opposed the India Act; predictably it perceived the slackening of British authority as part of a Jewish plot to dissolve the Empire and as a surrender to the forces of anarchy.⁶⁴ However, Leese was willing to grant autonomy in all areas except foreign policy to what he described as the fighting races of India who he believed possessed 'the noble instinct' and were capable of self-sacrifice in the service of a cause greater than themselves.⁶⁵ The fighting races, including the Sikhs, Rajputs, Punjabi Mohammedans, Dogras, Pathans, and Ghurkhas, would be allowed to maintain nation states within the Empire. According to Leese, the rest of India could not be regarded as 'really national', being slave races that would be 'happy under just Nordic rule, which should be absolute over them.'⁶⁶

The BUF, Italy and Abyssinia

Reacting to the Government's public response to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, the BUF was adamant that no British interest was compromised by the Italian action and that Britain should not embroil itself in matters that were none of its concern, particularly as Britain was not equipped to deal with the consequences of enforcing sanctions, which the BUF was convinced would provoke a war with Italy that would escalate into a world war.⁶⁷ Contrarily, the IFL declared that: 'Despite the vapourings [*sic*] of Mosley, the crux of Italy's actions is a threat on [*sic*] British interests...'⁶⁸ The BUF rejected the notion that Italy and Abyssinia were equal in the eyes of the League;

under fascism, with its 'leadership principle', the superiority of the white races would be maintained and the, allegedly, debased and uncivilised peoples would be forcibly deterred from jeopardising civilisation and committing atrocities.⁶⁹

The BUF supported the Italian invasion and opposed sanctions arguing that the Abyssinian government had forfeited any right to the League's protection on the grounds that Abyssinia should never have been admitted to the League because of its barbaric and poverty stricken condition, which, it asserted, de-legitimised the regime.⁷⁰ Examples of the barbaric nature of the Abyssinians included the torture of captured Italian prisoners, the use of 'dum dum' bullets, aggression towards neighbouring states, the mutilation and murder of civilians, the continuance of the slave trade, the existence of child marriages, and the fact that syphilis was endemic.⁷¹ An article in *Action* claimed that the Italians' use of poison gas was justified because the Abyssinians had abused the Red Cross symbol and committed atrocities.

The BUF also claimed that Italy was being singled out, as sanctions had not been applied to other nations that had transgressed in a similar fashion. To the BUF it was clear that Italy was being punished for being a fascist state.⁷² In addition it was argued that international oil companies and international finance were leading the 'howl of protest against Mussolini.'⁷³ Interestingly, while the BUF claimed that Jews were orchestrating the demand for sanctions against Italy, the IFL was concerned that Mussolini was under Jewish influence.⁷⁴ The *Fascist* went so far as to say that: 'Mussolini's attitude towards Jews is one of miserable toadying.'⁷⁵

Alleging that the Government's apparent support for sanctions against Italy would lead to war, Mosley, under the banner 'Mind Britain's Business' with its clear connotations of isolationism, began a series of public meetings in August 1935 in support of a peace campaign designed to raise awareness of the danger of war and to

mobilise public opinion against it, culminating in a ‘monster’ petition against war launched in September.⁷⁶ The *Blackshirt* boasted that thousands of people came to the meetings and that the peace campaign generated increased levels of public support for the BUF.⁷⁷ Yet, this did not translate in to an increase in membership, which continued to decline.⁷⁸

The BUF argued on the one hand, that if sanctions were effective they would inevitably lead to war. On the other, if they were ineffective, it was hypocrisy to support them and would lead to an embarrassing climb-down by the British Government when it became obvious that they had failed.⁷⁹ Its assessment of the situation was correct in that the imposition of sanctions was ineffective and once hostilities had ceased the Government dropped the question of sanctions. That the Government appeared reluctant to take unilateral action to enforce sanctions and requested French support was ascribed, of course, to the effects of the peace campaign.⁸⁰

As the 1930s progressed Italy featured less prominently in the fascist press as Germany took centre stage, but reports and comments, such as those noting the success of Mussolini’s plans to raise the birth rate and the improvement in Italian living standards, were usually congratulatory.⁸¹

British fascists and Germany

Although the majority of the British mainstream press expressed concern at some elements of the nature and practice of the Nazi regime, the BUF press, unsurprisingly, continued to regard it with approval and frequently pointed out the superiority of conditions in Germany compared to Britain.⁸² An account of life in Germany published in *Action* found nothing but peace and contentment.⁸³ Another example

described the German ship of state as safe with Hitler at the helm and Göring navigating.⁸⁴ Hitler's 'superb achievements' were also extolled, using statistics supplied by the Führer, and there was praise for Nazi policies to encourage workers 'back to the land'.⁸⁵ In contrast, the BUF proclaimed that British leaders brought humiliation to the country; only Mosley and the BUF could return Britain to its rightful place in the world.⁸⁶

If news from Germany reflected badly on fascism and could not be ignored it was reinterpreted through a fascist lens. For example, the Blomberg scandal (see below) was given a positive spin, with the *Fascist* crediting Hitler with ending the class war in Germany.⁸⁷ In some cases it was difficult to justify Nazi policy or dress the facts in any positive light. Therefore, the BUF attempted to distance itself from events, such as the persecution of the German Churches. *Action* stressed that nothing similar would occur in Britain and ascribed it to 'the curious folk-lore ideology of certain sections of the Nazi Party, which is purely local and German in character and ... finds no shadow of response in British Union.'⁸⁸ However, criticism of the Nazi regime did not sit well with the BUF and within a fortnight the Rev. H. E. B. Nye played down the persecution of the German Churches as necessary for German unity, given that the Protestant Churches were not willing to merge into one body. He considered that the persecution might be divinely inspired, inflicted as God's punishment for "our unhappy divisions".⁸⁹

Clearly, there were significant similarities between the BUF's policy on appeasement and that of the Government, although the BUF saw Hitler's actions in a more positive light. The BUF supported all of Germany's expansionist actions and was vigorously opposed to any British 'interference' in matters that were not Britain's concern. Coming to terms with Germany's ambitions was portrayed as being in

Britain's best interests.⁹⁰ The movement's press repeatedly urged that Britain should renounce all east European commitments, return the mandated colonies and negotiate a degree of European disarmament, while simultaneously demanding Britain's defence be strengthened.⁹¹ Except for the return of the mandated colonies, this was very similar to Government policy. Both the fascists and the mainstream press criticised the pace of the Government's rearmament programme, but not its direction. The policy of the IFL was also very similar, the notable difference being that they too opposed the return of the mandated colonies.⁹²

As was to be expected both the BUF and the IFL supported Germany's annexation of Austria. The *Fascist* trumpeted that Austria had been 'emancipated.'⁹³ The BUF was equally convinced of the positive nature of Hitler's expansion of the Reich, and John Emery, *Action's* industrial expert, maintained that Austrian workers had everything to gain and nothing to lose from joining Germany. Historically, he claimed that a clear desire for economic union with Germany had been expressed in earlier plebiscites.⁹⁴ The same issue proclaimed from the front page that there was no British interest in Austria, and lauded 'Hitler's triumphant progress' and enthusiastic reception.⁹⁵ A. K. Chesterton, in the 'Reveille' column, asserted that Hitler had liberated Germany from the Treaty of Versailles and had set Austria free.⁹⁶ A few pages later he reiterated these claims in more purple prose and prophesied a future filled with promise: 'Today her people are linked indissolubly in brotherhood with a resurgent Germany, serene in her strength, superbly organised, superbly led, able to command for them a brighter, happier future and a loftier way of life.'⁹⁷ R. Gordon Canning was moved by events to even more mystical and pseudo-philosophical verbiage. Proclaiming, in a passage so convoluted as to be unintelligible, that 'Germany Confounds Spengler' he declared:

The dynamic force of the German race, cleansed of the devitalising, corrupting elements which have crept in for the last few years, has, under the spiritual force of National Socialism and a Hitler, thrown off the dead hands of Schopenhauer pessimism, and under a Nietzschean urge of “yea” to life has arisen to bestride central Europe a living force and splendour, the saviour of his race.’⁹⁸

Despite his verbosity it is plain that Gordon Canning saw Hitler as a knight in shining armour and was alluding to German philosophy in an attempt to give substance to Hitler’s character and policies and their ‘revitalisation’ of the German race.

The increase in international tension surrounding the annexation encouraged Mosley to resurrect the peace campaign with a new slogan: ‘Britain First.’⁹⁹ The campaign coincided with a growth in membership, though Webber attributes this chiefly to dissatisfaction with the Conservative party, and suggests that BUF support was drawn largely from disaffected Conservative voters in the middle and anti-socialist working classes. Based on his analysis of BUF membership patterns, Webber argues that by 1939 the movement was predominantly middle class.¹⁰⁰

According to Special Branch reports, the public meetings associated with the campaign were well attended, peaking in July 1939 when Linehan estimates 11,000 attended a meeting at Earl’s Court. Relying on the same Special Branch report Pugh puts the figure closer to 20,000, with up to 10,000 having paid for their ticket.¹⁰¹ Clearly, the similarity between the BUF’s foreign policy and that of the Government, which initially enjoyed considerable public approval of its policy of appeasement, enabled potential supporters to view the BUF as part of the mainstream.

British fascists were also sympathetic to Hitler’s demands that Czechoslovakia relinquish the Sudetenland and its largely German population. Mosley urged that Hitler’s demands should be met and rejected the idea that Hitler would break his word or move beyond the boundaries that he had agreed.¹⁰² In an attempt to bolster Germany’s claim to the disputed territory the BUF repeated Nazi propaganda

claiming that the large German minority in Czechoslovakia was disgracefully mistreated, and described the beleaguered state as ‘that most evil spawn of the Treaty of Versailles’, an ‘unhappy little synthetic conglomeration of peoples’, and a ‘ramshackle state.’¹⁰³

Action quoted figures showing that half the population of Czechoslovakia were non-Czech, and a third were neither Czech nor Slovak. Among these were 3.5 million Germans who wanted to join Germany. Consequently, according to the BUF, it was only right that Hitler should come to their rescue.¹⁰⁴ As in the popular press, it was repeatedly stated that Britain should mind its own business, which did not include Czechoslovakia or anywhere else in Eastern Europe; Britons should only fight to defend Britain.¹⁰⁵

The BUF and the IFL were equally convinced that Jewish influences were at work behind the scenes, pressing for Government commitment to the preservation of Czechoslovakia. Both Mosley and Leese quoted Earl Winterton, speaking in the House of Commons in 1934, as saying that the ‘whole of the land in Czechoslovakia belongs to Jewish money lenders.’¹⁰⁶

The attitude of British fascists towards Chamberlain, appeasement and the Munich Agreement was varied. While it was not surprising that they were opposed to any war with Germany, the reaction of the IFL to Chamberlain’s peace efforts was unexpected. At a time when the mainstream press had begun to question whether the Munich Agreement had been an unalloyed blessing, the *Fascist* declared: ‘Thank you, Mr Chamberlain. One man alone saved Britain, and her Empire, from chaos and possible destruction; Neville Chamberlain.’¹⁰⁷ His meeting with Hitler was described as in line with fascist policy, that is Aryans acting in their own interests without

Jewish interference.¹⁰⁸ In April 1938 Chamberlain was further commended for continuing to fight for peace.¹⁰⁹

The BUF was less consistent in its response. Mosley, writing in *Action*, acknowledged that Chamberlain had rejected the giving of military guarantees to Czechoslovakia, but remained critical of the possibility of Britain's involvement in a war arising over Czechoslovakia.¹¹⁰ In May 1938 *Action* acknowledged that Chamberlain, Hoare and Halifax had some sense of responsibility and desire for peace, although it was feared that Jewish interests were manoeuvring to replace Chamberlain with the War Minister, Hore-Belisha.¹¹¹

This mild approbation was short-lived. Two weeks later Chamberlain was accused of pursuing a dishonest foreign policy.¹¹² *Action* did, however, congratulate Chamberlain on his courage and good sense in securing agreement with Hitler, but stressed his advanced age and his dread of aeroplanes, which, implicitly, compared unfavourably with Mosley. In a further attempt to undermine his statesmanship and authority, it was also claimed that the BUF could have solved the problem in one visit to Germany instead of Chamberlain's three, as forging an agreement would have been much easier for an 'authoritarian ruler, who could speak for his nation.'¹¹³

Chamberlain's alleged frailty was also raised in *Blackshirt*, which advised readers, in future, not to rely on him to withstand the pressure from forces intent on war.¹¹⁴ Chamberlain's achievement was further down-played by claims that he was using National Socialist methods of diplomacy; that only the success of Mosley's campaign to alert the people of Britain to the danger of war had strengthened the will of the people which had braced Chamberlain's resistance to the pressure of the 'war mongers'; and that the agreement was based on Mosley's plan for peace.¹¹⁵ Regardless, the claim that Mosley had been advocating a similar solution to the

Czechoslovakia crisis three days before the Munich agreement was signed would be unlikely to convince any but the staunchest of BUF members that he had influenced the agreement.¹¹⁶ Nonetheless, according to *Action*, it was Mosley who had stood like a rock, stiffening the will to peace and preventing the British people from being panicked into war.¹¹⁷ It appears that when Government policy coincided with that of the BUF, the latter claimed to have influenced the former, and in order to maintain the superiority of the fascist system of government it was necessary to criticise the implementation of the policy.

Following the German occupation of the Sudetenland in September 1938 there was no criticism of Hitler or the Nazi regime in the British fascist press. *Action* cast Hitler in the role of peacemaker asserting that his rapid action had ended the Czech-Slovak clash.¹¹⁸ Mosley remained adamant that Eastern Europe was of no concern to Britain and he was not worried that Germany was growing stronger.¹¹⁹ Any criticism in the mainstream press of Germany's action was berated as only serving to make relations between Germany and Britain more difficult, when the people of Britain wanted friendship with Germany and to 'Mind Britain's Business.'¹²⁰ Michael Goulding, prospective BUF parliamentary candidate, assured readers that as the continued existence of Czechoslovakia had become unviable Hitler had acted quickly to prevent Russia extending Communist hegemony and to restore law and order.¹²¹

Having previously claimed that Czechoslovakia had been created for the purpose of encircling Germany, the BUF began to contend that Germany was now subject to economic encirclement.¹²² In response to the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, the BUF insisted that Hitler had acted on the invitation of the Slovakian premier to contain internal disruption.¹²³ Hitler's rapid response was praised for preventing a potential extension of communist hegemony across

Czechoslovakia.¹²⁴ Stressing that Britain had no interest in Eastern Europe, and once more quoting Winterton, Mosley repeated the claim that Jews owned all the land in Czechoslovakia.¹²⁵ He was insistent that it was not in Britain's interests to thwart German ambitions in Eastern Europe.¹²⁶ Germany's actions had a noticeable effect on public opinion and on Government understanding of German intentions, but had no impact on fascist perceptions.

During the late spring and summer of 1939, as Hitler turned his attention to Poland and Mosley intensified his peace campaign, the same old refrain was played again and again. The Poles were alleged to be oppressing Germans in Danzig, Jews controlled Poland, Britain had no interest in Poland, British lives would be lost for no advantage, and the Labour party had betrayed the working class by promoting war.¹²⁷ Labour's alleged betrayal of the workers was said to leave the British people no hope of salvation until the BUF's 'British policies' were implemented.¹²⁸ Speaking at Islington, Anne Brock-Griggs continued to portray the movement as the solution to the nation's ills claiming that only Mosley and the BUF stood 'organised to express the will of the people.'¹²⁹ Following the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact Mosley announced that it was absurd to contemplate going to war over Poland as there was no way to get aid or military assistance to there in time to be of any use.¹³⁰ Alluding to First World War propaganda, *Action* warned that all that could be done was to 'bomb German babies and get our own bombed in return'¹³¹

The IFL adopted a similar line regarding the lack of any British interest in Poland, but Leese developed the theme further and claimed that it was 'the Prudential Assurance Company that is interested in Poland, and that Company is linked up with Jewish interests all over the world.'¹³² Leese backed up his claim by explaining that the Prudential invested in Jewish run-companies such as Imperial Chemical Industries

and Marks and Spencer and also owned an insurance company based in Warsaw, which was linked to other Polish based companies with Jewish connections. In an attempt to demonstrate that the Jews controlled Poland, Leese quoted the *Times* and a Foreign Office source to corroborate his claim that the chief landowners in urban Poland were Jews. Finally, in what was obviously meant to be the clinching point of his argument, he implied that the Polish foreign minister, Colonel Beck, held his post because he was the Jews' spokesman and was of Jewish birth.¹³³

The IFL shared the opinion of the *Express* that there would be no war in 1939. In May, Leese claimed that the Jews had failed in their efforts to bring about a war with Germany and insisted that the Germans were 'our friends, not our enemies.'¹³⁴ A couple of months later 'H.H.L.' was convinced that there would be no war in the autumn of 1939, or for many years to come and only fools influenced by a biased, Jewish press believed the rumours that Hitler was preparing for war.¹³⁵ The claim that war was not imminent was repeated in August.¹³⁶ However, by the time September's issue of the *Fascist* went to press Leese was less sure of a peaceful future; he claimed that the Jews had started the last war and the same was happening again.¹³⁷

RESPONSE OF THE MAINSTREAM PRESS

The mainstream press and the League of Nations

The response of the mainstream press to the League varied considerably, as can be seen from the reactions to the 1935 peace ballot. The *Manchester Guardian*, the *News Chronicle*, and the *Herald* enthusiastically supported the peace ballot.¹³⁸ The *Mirror* also viewed the ballot in a positive light.¹³⁹ Predictably, the *Express* was hostile and three years later was still giving vent to its hostility.¹⁴⁰ When the vote was

published in June 1936 the *Manchester Guardian* reported that the *Mail* ignored it, the *Express* elected to publish only the result of the final question, which had received the least favourable response for the League's position, and the *Times* and the *Telegraph* had relegated it to the inside pages. Despite the attempts by some papers to play down the significance of the ballot, the *Manchester Guardian* claimed that, with ninety-seven percent of nearly 12,000,000 people voting in favour of the League, there could be no doubt that the League commanded considerable public support.¹⁴¹ Mowat suggests that the National Government was more publicly sympathetic to the League of Nations following the peace ballot.¹⁴²

The attitude of the mainstream press towards the League remained less enthusiastic than that of the general public. The *Telegraph* published anti-League opinions, particularly in relation to the handling of the Manchuria crisis, and expressed the view that Japan's withdrawal, in response to criticism in Geneva, would threaten the stability of the League and might lead to its demise.¹⁴³ While the *Telegraph* defended Japan's position, the *Times* was supportive of the League, blaming Japan's rejection of any criticism for the difficulties faced by the League in attempting to resolve the crisis.¹⁴⁴ The *Times* was, however, concerned that without Japan the League would become even more preponderantly European and would have less influence in the Far East.¹⁴⁵

There were also concerns that the continued failure of the disarmament process would 'deal a smashing blow at the League of Nations, still further weaken the already debilitated principle of international conciliation, and render immeasurably more difficult all common efforts ...'¹⁴⁶ Despite this the *Times* remained loyal to the League seeing it as a symbol of a new order of international society.¹⁴⁷ Editorials continued to defend the League, supporting its principles, while

acknowledging a need for some constructive reform.¹⁴⁸ Overall, the *Times* perceived the League's power of collective action as having immense potential and was convinced that it acted as a deterrent.¹⁴⁹

In the popular press, the *Express* and, to a greater extent, the *Mail*, inclined towards a slightly more heightened rendition of the line taken by the *Telegraph*, while the *Mirror* was closer to the *Times* in attitude. As early as 1931 the *Express* urged that Britain should withdraw from the League, and from Europe, and concentrate on the Empire.¹⁵⁰ 'Beachcomber' was unimpressed by threats to expel recalcitrant members, comparing it to telling a boy that if he was not good he would not be allowed to kiss his auntie.¹⁵¹

Appealing to national sentiment, later *Express* editorials reminded readers that the capital of Great Britain was London, not Geneva, and repeatedly warned readers against 'the fatal legacy of the League' - a legacy which meant that the enforcing of resolutions would be left to Britain.¹⁵²

The leader columns of the *Mail* berated the League for its failings, and its stance on Manchuria came in for particular criticism. The League was accused of taking foolish action that could lead to war in the Far East.¹⁵³ Japan was exonerated of all blame and portrayed as the only hope of peace in the region, while the League was described as helpless.¹⁵⁴ The views of the *Mail's* special correspondent, G. Ward Price, were reiterated in an editorial that claimed that without the support of the League China would never have forced Japan to act; she would have been obliged to accede to Japan's earlier demands.¹⁵⁵

While the *Mirror* printed criticism of the League, it did not necessarily share the pessimism of the views it reported, although by the latter months of 1933 it was concerned that the League's reputation was badly damaged and urged that less chatter

and more action was required.¹⁵⁶ The *Mirror* explained to readers that it had been a supporter of the League and the disarmament process ‘while these ideals retained some essence of hope and practicability.’¹⁵⁷ Unfortunately, the absence of several world powers left the League unrepresentative and, the *Mirror* felt that the diminishment of the League, coupled with the reduction of Britain’s armaments, was cause for grave concern. The *Mirror* continued to support the principles of the League, but had lost faith in disarmament: ‘Our era of splendid isolation is over. In the complicated scientific and economic conditions of the world to-day, it is impossible to stand alone... the wisest course is to put our trust in more aeroplanes rather than words and conferences.’¹⁵⁸

Throughout, the liberal press remained supportive, and the *Manchester Guardian* staunchly declared that ‘the more others default, the stronger must be our support. The League is capable of reform, if others have left or are threatening to leave, that is not because of its defects.’¹⁵⁹

There was a degree of consensus between the attitudes of some elements of the mainstream press and those of British fascists towards the League. The fascists may have expressed their views more forcibly than the mainstream, but they were broadly similar in sentiment to those of the *Telegraph*, *Mail* and *Express*. Britain’s commitment to the League was perceived as supporting interference in the affairs of other nations, and in the eyes of British fascists, the *Express* and the *Mail*, was not in keeping with their policy of imperial isolation.

The mainstream press and the Empire

If the BUF’s policy of Empire autarchy bore the imprint of Joseph Chamberlain’s Tariff Reform League, so too did the Empire Free Trade Crusade launched by

Beaverbrook on 8 July 1929.¹⁶⁰ The Crusade aimed at binding Britain and the Empire into a close economic unit and advocated taxing all goods imported into Britain, except for those from within the Empire. Adrian Bingham argues that Beaverbrook and Rothermere had an 'an idealised vision of the Empire and the heroic qualities of its inhabitants.'¹⁶¹ Yet, as a Canadian, Beaverbrook's commitment to the Empire was genuine and longstanding. He complained in the *Sunday Express* that while there was a general sentiment of goodwill towards the Empire, 'the practical side of Imperial development has been forgotten.'¹⁶² In support of the campaign the *Express* began to print the image of a crusader, in red, on the paper's masthead.

Beaverbrook was also motivated by the desire to oust Baldwin from the leadership of the Conservative party. Rothermere felt even more strongly that Baldwin was ruining the party. He believed that Baldwin had thrown away the victory that had been handed to the Conservatives by the *Mail's* publication of the Zinoviev letter.¹⁶³ Although he had doubts about the merits of taxing food, together with Beaverbrook he founded the United Empire Party (UEP) on 18 February 1930.¹⁶⁴ 250,000 readers subscribed £100,000. Two 'Empire Free Trade' candidates were successful in by-elections at Twickenham and West Fulham and there was support for the movement from prominent businessmen.¹⁶⁵

By the end of June Rothermere had accepted the need for taxes on imported food and the pair were confident of their eventual success. Their papers urged support for Empire Free Trade, particularly during by-elections.¹⁶⁶ Baldwin came very close to resigning, but in March 1931 he rallied the party behind him with his most famous speech, attacking the press barons for 'aiming at power, but power without responsibility – the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages.'¹⁶⁷ Baldwin's victory was sealed on 20 March when Duff Cooper, the official

Conservative candidate, defeated the UEP candidate, in the St. George's Westminster by-election. Duff Cooper had been supported by the editors of the *Times* and the *Telegraph* who were alarmed at the damage that was being inflicted on the Conservative party. Within days Beaverbrook had negotiated a truce with Baldwin and all that remained of the Crusade was the image of the crusader, which was retained on the masthead of the *Express*.¹⁶⁸ In April, the *Express* advised Empire Crusaders to vote for the Conservative candidate in the East Woolwich by-election.¹⁶⁹

Both the *Mail* and the *Express* remained committed to the Empire and both continually berated the Government for devoting scarce resources to foreign commitments and failing to invest in the Empire.¹⁷⁰ Their leader columns continued to demand Empire Free Trade and increased home production.¹⁷¹ Again, both were critical of the Government's India policy and they were also concerned that not enough was being done to ensure the Empire's defence.¹⁷² The *Mail* was particularly vehement in its criticism describing the policy as 'truckling to treason', and compared it to the handing over of Ireland in response to Sinn Fein pressure.¹⁷³ Beaverbrook was less insistent on retaining the *status quo* within the Empire, and the 'Beachcomber' column, in the *Express*, and David Low, the *Evening Standard's* cartoonist, mocked the stereotypical characters associated with diehard imperialism.¹⁷⁴

The quality press adopted a neutral approach to Beaverbrook's initial EFT crusade. The *Times* regarded it as useful in directing attention to the possibilities of trade within the Empire, but thought EFT would be difficult to implement due to the need to secure the agreement of the governments of the Dominions.¹⁷⁵ The creation of the UEP was not welcomed. The *Times* pointed to the similarities between its policy and that of the Conservative party and claimed the UEP had no hope of

success.¹⁷⁶ The paper recognised that the most likely result was to split the Conservative vote and that the founders of the UEP hoped to undermine Baldwin's leadership.¹⁷⁷ Its support for Baldwin was unequivocal.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, the *Telegraph* supported the Government's policy on trade within the Empire and deplored the 'manifest folly of the internecine conflict' in the Conservative party ranks.¹⁷⁹

Unsurprisingly, both papers backed the Government's policy on India, and the White Paper and the report of the Select Committee on India were equally warmly received.¹⁸⁰

Although the popular Tory press shared the desire of the British fascists to retain control of the Empire and to create a self contained economic union within it, they did not advocate the brutal imposition of British authority envisaged by the BUF.

The mainstream press, Italy and Abyssinia

According to Graves and Hodge, the attitude of the British press to Mussolini and Fascist Italy was split down party lines. The left-wing press opposed the 'gangster methods' used against socialists while the Conservative papers asserted that Mussolini had saved Italy from a Red revolution and regarded Fascism as representing no threat to the British Empire.¹⁸¹

When Mussolini became prime minister the leader column in most papers commented on the event, but the *Mail* had other priorities: its readers needed to be warned of the Bolshevik threat of the Labour party leadership and its designs on the private property of ordinary citizens, including 'every woman's clothes and jewellery.'¹⁸² Later the *Mail* gave its approval to Italian Fascism and when the Nazis came to power they, too, were accorded its blessing.

The *Express* was less supportive of Fascism and National Socialism. Graves and Hodge attribute this to its readers being more progressive and open-minded than those of the *Mail*.¹⁸³ Reports from Italy were frequently unflattering. The *Express* was critical of Rome Radio, and reported that Mussolini was looking for a face-saving way of withdrawing from the Spanish Civil War because of economic difficulties at home and the need to reinforce troops in Abyssinia, where Abyssinian soldiers in the Italian army were said to be mutinying in four districts.¹⁸⁴ Editorial comment in the *Express* acknowledged that Mussolini was a shrewd ruler and that good relations with Italy would be to Britain's advantage, but advised that when Mussolini sought 'reconciliation' he meant 'cash' and while Britain might want peace it did not want to pay blackmail. Potential investors were warned to look long and hard at the Italian State budget and counselled to invest at home or in the Empire.¹⁸⁵ An accompanying article declared Italy and Germany were partners in exacting ransom from the rest of the world but, as the interests of the two dictators were incompatible and Italy was struggling militarily and financially, there was no need to talk of war.¹⁸⁶

In relation to Abyssinia, the quality press presented Mussolini as the clear aggressor in the conflict. The *Times* and *Telegraph* both championed collective sanctions against Italy and supported the Government's public stance.¹⁸⁷ The *Telegraph's* coverage of the war and its background was couched in neutral terms, but clearly expressed sympathy for the difficulties faced by the Abyssinian Emperor, Haile Selassie, who was attempting to end slavery and trying to improve conditions in Abyssinia.¹⁸⁸ Italian claims that Abyssinia was not fit to be a member of the League were refuted on the grounds that it was Italy that had instigated Abyssinia's admittance in 1923.¹⁸⁹ The *Times* encouraged contributions to a fund for medical aid to Abyssinia.¹⁹⁰

Opinion in the popular press was divided. The editorial columns of the *Mail* could clearly have been culled from the pages of the *Blackshirt* or *Action*. The imposition of sanctions was opposed, as the *Mail* believed they would not work, and was certain that interference in matters that were not Britain's concern would lead to war.¹⁹¹ Ward Price purveyed the line that the Government had abandoned the principle of 'Britain First', and made accusations very similar to those of the fascists, including claims that Abyssinia was 'a barbarous, slave-owning country which should never have been admitted to the League ...'.¹⁹² While these accusations were not unfounded, they took no account of the attempts at reform which the Emperor was, admittedly, struggling to introduce.

Meanwhile, the *Express* supported the Government's decision not to take unilateral action, and, based on the belief that France would not agree to anything but modest sanctions, was confident that there would be no expansion of the conflict to Europe.¹⁹³ Although the policy of 'Splendid Isolation' continued to be advocated, the *Express* was critical of Italy and sympathetic to Abyssinia.¹⁹⁴

Clearly the *Mail* was more radical than other mainstream papers in its presentation of events in Abyssinia, and once more the similarity between its views and those of British fascists was notable.

The mainstream press, Germany and appeasement

Richard Cockett has suggested, with some justification, that, in dealing with Germany, self-censorship was widespread throughout the British press.¹⁹⁵ Chamberlain was unhappy with Foreign Office (FO) policy in relation to the fascist powers. As part of his ongoing struggle to make progress with appeasement, while the FO advised taking a firmer line with the dictators, he sought to manipulate the press

so his view was always given prominence over that of the FO. To this end he centralised the flow of news from Whitehall using the lobby system. Cockett claims that Chamberlain adopted a 'personal touch' towards newspaper proprietors and editors to persuade them into greater self-censorship. This was thought to be important for the success of appeasement as Halifax had learned from his discussions with Goebbels and Hitler that a pre-condition of any settlement would be the ending of what the Nazis regarded as press attacks on Germany and, particularly, on Hitler, who was 'absurdly sensitive to adverse press comment.'¹⁹⁶

According to Cockett, Geoffrey Dawson, editor of the *Times*, was the first to feel the personal touch and he responded positively. Following a discussion with Halifax he wrote a leader that outlined German grievances and hoped for a settlement of territorial issues, which was well received in Germany, but caused concern in Prague.¹⁹⁷ This was followed by a couple of articles that supported claims of continuing discrimination against Czechoslovakia's large German minority despite the Czechoslovakian government's attempt to move to a more equal arrangement.¹⁹⁸ It is true that Dawson regularly saw both Halifax and Chamberlain to discuss the Government's foreign policy, however Cockett's claim that they manipulated Dawson and that he slavishly followed Chamberlain's policy is not convincing. Dawson had enjoyed a close friendship with Halifax for many years and Halifax's biographer describes their working relationship as symbiotic, although the *Times* was, on occasion, more pro-Germany than Halifax considered suitable.¹⁹⁹

Dawson had also been on friendly terms with previous prime ministers, Baldwin and Bonar-Law, and developed a similar relationship with Chamberlain. His commitment to pursuing a negotiated settlement to international disputes pre-dated Chamberlain's attempts to direct press comment on Germany. The discussions he had

with Chamberlain were not as one-sided as Cockett implies; at times it was Dawson who bolstered Chamberlain's resolve.²⁰⁰

Nonetheless, Chamberlain did try to direct what was published in the major papers. He met with senior figures in the British press, including Major Astor, owner of the *Observer*, Lord Southwood of the *Herald*, and Sir Walter Layton of the *News Chronicle* to explain the potentially serious implications for Britain if the Government's foreign policy failed. These meetings appear to have borne fruit for the Government. So seriously did Southwood take Halifax's warnings of the delicate nature of international negotiations that journalists at the *Herald* complained about the pressure put on them not to be too critical of foreign policy. Garvin, editor of the *Observer*, encouraged by Astor, supported appeasement and Beaverbrook was also enthusiastic about Chamberlain's diplomatic efforts. The *Mirror* was one of the few national papers not to have contact with the Government.²⁰¹

The *Telegraph* also responded to pressure from Chamberlain; claiming that 'the freedom of the Press' was an empty phrase it urged that the 'irresponsible press' should be stopped from sabotaging peace.²⁰² However, by November 1938 the *Telegraph* had rallied to the cause of press freedom. In the face of Cabinet attempts to suppress information, it declared that democracy could not function if the press were muzzled.²⁰³

Despite the *Times*' support for appeasement, its encouraging editorials and Dawson's attempts to exclude anything that could be regarded as unfair criticism, events in Germany continued to be reported, including unrest in the army and the internal re-organisation of the Nazi Party.²⁰⁴ The paper was appalled by the forceful annexation of Austria, describing it as the 'latest and the worst demonstration of the methods of German foreign policy.'²⁰⁵ Subsequent editorials referred to 'bully tactics'

and 'brutal methods.'²⁰⁶ Similarly, editorials in the *Telegraph* referred to 'ruthless aggression' and condemned German action in Austria, but remained supportive of the Government's policy of appeasement.²⁰⁷

The Munich Agreement was generally warmly received. However, the *Telegraph's* editorial was less than fulsome: 'Peace, even at a price, is a blessing ...'²⁰⁸ Given a couple of days reflection, the paper's leader writers were even less certain of what had been gained and began to give more consideration to the price and who was paying it. It was suggested that Chamberlain could have been firmer with Hitler and that, given Hitler's preference for force rather than negotiation, the Government needed to increase Britain's defensive capabilities.²⁰⁹ The following day's editorial expressed sympathy for Czechoslovakia and, while continuing to be grateful for Chamberlain's efforts, was mildly critical that better terms had not been negotiated.²¹⁰

By December the *Telegraph's* disconcertion at the post-Munich situation led to a leader column that admitted that appeasement had been less successful than had been hoped.²¹¹ Although the *Telegraph* continued to support appeasement, its confidence in the policy was less marked and the need for Britain to be defensively strong was reiterated.²¹² The paper published unflattering reports of events in Germany relating to the persecution of the Churches, falling standards of living and food shortages, and also criticised the German press and Hitler's foreign policy.²¹³

Throughout the spring and summer of 1939 the *Telegraph* supported the possibility of negotiation with Hitler, but reminded readers that Hitler's duplicity meant it was impossible to trust German assurances and that other methods were likely to be necessary to ensure peace.²¹⁴ To this end the paper advocated a close relationship with France and higher defence spending.²¹⁵ Distinguishing itself from

the popular press, the *Telegraph* recommended the Government not to be timid in making commitments via non-aggression fronts, and supported the guarantee of Polish independence.²¹⁶ As August drew to a close the *Telegraph* reflected the mood of a country that was poised on the brink of war; one that was united, composed and resolved to keep its commitments.²¹⁷ Hitler was seen as the only threat to peace and security; the decision for peace or war was his alone.²¹⁸

With the exception of the *Mirror*, the popular press also enthusiastically supported appeasement. The *Mirror* opposed German aggression and compared the annexation of Austria to being seized by gangsters, and noted that gangsters could only be disarmed by force. It insisted that appeasement had failed and would continue to fail; it was time for the Government to stop negotiating and re-arm.²¹⁹

The *Mail* shared the *Mirror*'s desire for re-armament. It ascribed Hitler's success to 'the ruthless display of might, coupled with the threat it might be used', and saw a clear lesson for Britain: 'Arm, arm, arm ... Arm and keep out of unnecessary foreign entanglements ... [this quarrel is] no concern of ours.'²²⁰ Yet in November 1938 readers were advised that, under German control, Vienna was better than before: a city of 'women, song, and strong men.'²²¹ A year after the annexation it reported that Austria was little changed and still charming.²²²

The *Express*, in line with its policy of 'Splendid Isolation', was also unconcerned at the fate of Austria, regarding the *Anschluss* as inevitable.²²³ Emrys Jones confided to readers that German domination would have slight impact on Austrians, many of whom were so poor that 'Nazi poverty' would be little extra burden. He maintained that if there were few who were enthusiastic, most were not averse to becoming part of the Third Reich.²²⁴ In its editorial comment, the paper was adamant that Britain had no right to interfere, and, as Austria was a German province, should not attempt

to ‘... keep Germans apart.’²²⁵ Austria was ‘Hitler’s business.’²²⁶ Despite this it would be unfair to describe the overall feel of the paper as pro-Nazi, unlike the *Mail*, which carried positive reports from George Ward Price on Hitler’s Germany and his ‘triumphal drive’ through Austria; the *Express* repeatedly mentioned that Hitler looked small and tired.²²⁷

During the Austrian crisis the *Express* continued to report events in Germany, including that the paper together with sixteen other foreign papers had been confiscated for reporting the scandal caused by General Blomberg’s ‘secret’ marriage to a typist. Blomberg was forced to resign by an outraged military hierarchy, even though Hitler and Goebbels had been witnesses at the wedding.²²⁸ Hitler responded by sacking thirteen Generals, and making himself ‘Supreme War Lord.’²²⁹ The paper interpreted these events as a positive sign for peace in Europe, claiming that Germany was divided at senior levels and that Hitler had not overcome the army, which advocated a more moderate foreign policy than Hitler wanted.²³⁰

Interestingly, the *Express* repudiated claims that, as none of the dissident Generals had been shot, Hitler was more ‘decent’ than Stalin: ‘That decent fellow at any rate sadly forgot his old school tie on June 30 1934. At that time not fewer than two hundred Storm Troopers fell under the bullets of his execution squad.’²³¹

The *Express* also reported events that showed Germany in a poor light, including reports that the German press were ‘muzzled’, that women wept in Berlin when Pastor Niemöller was sent to a concentration camp, that Baron von Cram, a member of Germany’s Davis Cup team, was being held by the Nazi police, that Hitler had failed in an attempt to purge the officer corps at Allenstein, and that Hitler was a dangerous, romantic dreamer with an almost dual personality.²³²

Both of the Tory popular papers were resolutely opposed to any British commitment to protect Czechoslovakia and the arguments and stock phrases familiar from the weeks leading up to the annexation of Austria were once again rehearsed. The editorial comment was depressingly similar. Initially, during the spring of 1938, the main line of argument was that Czechoslovakia was 'no concern of ours'; it had been created by the League of Nations and was 'no business of Britain's.'²³³ The *Express* added to this mix the conviction that Czechoslovakia would not give in without a fight and that the German army was not yet in a position to engage in one.²³⁴

Although the *Express* and the *Mail* supported Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, in the days immediately following the signing of the Munich Agreement on 29 March 1938 neither paper made any editorial comment on it. Towards the end of the year the *Express*, despite insisting on a policy of isolation, was slightly less sanguine about Hitler's expansionism and suggested that in pursuing appeasement Chamberlain needed to use a 'long spoon.'²³⁵ Shortly after this, the *Express* published a cartoon that showed 'Democracy' dozing with the lamp of freedom slipping from her grasp while Goebbels spread Nazi propaganda and offered 'New lamps for old.'²³⁶

On 15 March 1939, the day after the *Express* asserted that the Czechoslovakian issue had been settled at Munich, German troops marched into Bohemia and Moravia. The *Express* and the *Mail* excused the demise of Czechoslovakia on the grounds that it was an 'obvious vassal state of Germany' and its collapse was 'natural and inevitable.'²³⁷ There was no pleasure expressed at Czechoslovakia's demise, the *Express* described it as a 'sad, bad wretched moment', yet, according to the *Mail*, the shock was not its destruction but in the 'swift and brutal manner of its end.'²³⁸

It was not until the middle of August, however, that the *Mail* acknowledged the realities of Nazi foreign policy and recognised its intent to ‘smash Poland as an independent nation.’²³⁹ This revelation prompted it to declare that ‘the German mask comes off and the truth is revealed for all to see.’²⁴⁰ Readers were reassured that Britain was in a state of readiness to meet any eventuality, as was France, and both were resolved to preserve the integrity of Poland.²⁴¹ From this point on the *Mail*, while not relinquishing the hope of peace, was supportive of the decision to ‘stand by Poland’ and expressed pride in Britain’s preparedness and steadfastness.²⁴²

The *Express* continued to oppose ‘European commitment’, although from the beginning of August 1939 it did not voice that opposition as strenuously as before, having conceded that public opinion, albeit mistakenly, supported it.²⁴³ The paper reluctantly acknowledged some benefit from an alliance with France, but urged the ending of any obligations to Eastern Europe.²⁴⁴ Convinced that Hitler would be deterred by the scale of the destruction that would result from conflict in Europe, the *Express* reaffirmed its belief ‘that there will be no European war this year.’²⁴⁵ By the middle of the month the leader writer was taking comfort in Britain’s increased armed strength, noting that the country was now ready for war if necessary.²⁴⁶

The alliance between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union appeared to make the possibility of war more palatable for the *Express*, as it clarified the issue: ‘The democracies will be ranged against the Totalitarian States, and all the world will know that we are fighting so that freedom and liberty shall not perish in Europe.’²⁴⁷ Although the scales had fallen from the eyes of the *Express* in relation to Hitler, it appeared that the paper still had faith in Mussolini: ‘the Duce has worked magnificently for peace in Europe ... Italy, we know, will take no military initiative.’²⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

Webber has pointed to the changeable nature of BUF foreign policy, specifying three areas of modification, firstly in regard to the BUF's attitude to the League, secondly in its vision of a world order that was originally to be led by British example and was later modified to include an equal but different role for Germany, and, finally, in the re-location of the primary cause of war, which was no longer stated to be competition between the nations for markets, raw materials and investment opportunities, but was instead laid at the door of the Jews.²⁴⁹ Webber's analysis, while valuable, does not cover the full extent of BUF foreign policy. When considered in terms of the Empire, non-intervention in European affairs, and appeasement, there was a considerable degree of consistency, one could even say rigidity, to the BUF's policies. It remained unchanging in the face of world events; committed to a vision of a fascist Europe. To maintain that vision it was necessary to justify all actions of the fascist states.

From the evidence presented here it is clear that Lewis' contention that the BUF's foreign policy provided 'a clear and consistent alternative' to that of the British Government is unsustainable. As Pugh points out, in relation to appeasement its policies were similar in many respects to those pursued by the Government. This remained the case up until the German invasion of Czechoslovakia. Several aspects of BUF foreign policy were also shared with other groups, such as the Tariff Reform League, and there were marked similarities to the policies of some elements of the popular press in relation to the League of Nations, appeasement, isolation, and empire autarchy.

The resemblance of the BUF's policy to the Government's appeasement policy lent respectability to the BUF and made membership appear more acceptable to the

mainstream middle class. The success of the BUF's peace campaign indicates that it had found an issue around which it was possible to generate a sense of political legitimacy and inclusion in the mainstream.

When faced with changes of which it disapproved, for example the India Act, the BUF responded by simply declaring that a fascist government in Britain would re-impose British authority. The leadership appeared to have an unshakeable faith in the power of its collective will. While the movement's policies on the Empire were very different from those of the Government they were poorly thought through and its brutal plans to re-impose British authority across the Empire lacked credibility.

The *Express*, the *Mail*, and to a lesser extent, the *Telegraph* shared with the British fascists a distrust of, and even a contempt for, the League of Nations. Yet, the mainstream papers did not allege that Jews controlled the League.

The repeated declarations in the fascist press that Britain would only fight for Britons, and that minding Britain's business was the primary concern, were comparable in tone and frequency to those of the Tory popular press.²⁵⁰ There were also demands in the BUF press that the Empire should be Britain's first responsibility, but this point was laboured less than in the *Express* and the *Mail*. Despite the clear similarities between the opinions expressed in some of the mainstream popular press and the fascist press in relation to foreign commitments, the *Express* and the *Mail* did eventually recognise the failure of appeasement and they ascribed that failure to German aggression. The popular press, once resigned to the inevitability of war committed itself wholeheartedly to British victory. The British fascists remained convinced that the coming war was the work of Jewish malevolence and that friendship with Germany was both possible and desirable.

Clearly, there was a significant degree of convergence between British fascists and the mainstream in relation to appeasement during the late 1930s. Mosley and the BUF used the peace campaign to exploit this in a relatively successful attempt to gain legitimacy, improve their public image, and boost recruitment. Nonetheless, as events unfolded, they did not adapt their foreign policy and continued to advocate further German appeasement. As public attitudes towards Germany hardened, mainstream opinion began to diverge notably from that of the BUF.

In the coverage of events leading up to the Second World War the major areas of difference between the fascist and mainstream press were firstly, the fascist insistence that there was a conspiracy, instigated by France but supported by Russia and Britain, to encircle Germany politically and economically.²⁵¹ Secondly, the fascists claimed that all the major political parties, but particularly the Labour party, were intent on a war with Germany, as were 'the war-hungry press', and that the Jews were the driving force behind all of these groups.²⁵² Finally, and most significantly, the mainstream press was constantly giving the Government advice through its leader columns. They believed there was action the Government could and should take, or action it should refrain from. The British fascists, most notably the BUF, believed that democracy was doomed to fail and only they could govern effectively, so their comment on the Government's actions was almost always confined to a formulaic response along the lines of the Government was wrong, or weak, or corrupt and only fascism could save the Nation.²⁵³ Elements of the mainstream press were strongly critical of Government policy, but, colloquially speaking, they were inside the tent; the fascists were on the outside.

¹ G. C. Webber, 'Patterns of Membership and Support for the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 19 (1984), pp. 575-606.

² *Action*, 23 Apr 1938, p. 2; 30 Apr 1938, p. 1; 14 May 1938, p. 17; 3 Sep 1938 & 18 Feb 1939. *Blackshirt*, Jun 1938, pp. 2 & 6; Jul 1938, p. 2; Aug 1938, p. 2; Sep 1938, pp. 2 & 6.

³ Stephen Dorril, *Blackshirt* (Viking, London, 2006), p. 457. A transcript of Mosley's speech is available at: <http://www.oswaldmosley.com/britain-first.htm>. [18 March 2010].

⁴ Webber, 'Patterns', p. 577.

⁵ Martin Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts! Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between the Wars* (Jonathon Cape, London, 2005), pp. 273 & 279.

⁶ D. S. Lewis, *Illusions of Grandeur* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1987), p. 182.

⁷ G. C. Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right 1918-1939* (Croom Helm, London, 1986), pp. 121-2.

⁸ Neil Nugent 'The Ideas of the British Union of Fascists' in Neil Nugent & Roger King (eds) *The British Right* (Saxon House, Westmead, 1977), pp. 145; & Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right*, pp. 116-7, & 121.

⁹ See Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (Penguin, London, 1994), p. 34; Martin Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1982), pp. 277, 286; A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War 1919-1939* (Folio, London, 1963), p.101.

¹⁰ Martin Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century Volume Two: 1933-1951* (Harper Collins, London, 1998), p. 67; Taylor, *The Origins*, pp. 75 & 88. G. Kaeckenbeeck, 'The Character and Work of the Arbitral Tribunal of Upper Silesia' *Transactions of the Grotius Society*, vol. 21, Problems of Peace and War, Papers Read Before the Society in the Year 1935, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1935), pp. 38-39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/743063>. Christian Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten: Minority Protection under the League of Nations; The Case of the German Minority in Poland 1920-1934* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1999), pp.160-9.

¹¹ Taylor, *England 1914-1945* (Folio Society, London, 2000), p.330.

¹² Pugh, *We Danced*, p. 405.

¹³ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (Allen Lane, London, 2003), pp. 319-23.

-
- ¹⁴ Hobsbawm, *Age Of Extremes*, p.211.
- ¹⁵ Pugh, *We Danced*, p.408.
- ¹⁶ Gilbert, *A History* (vol. 1), pp.619-20.
- ¹⁷ Gilbert, *A History* (vol. 1), pp.607 & 787-8; & Gilbert, *A History* (vol. 2), p. 122.
- ¹⁸ *Telegraph*, 18 Mar 1933, p. 12.
- ¹⁹ Gilbert, *A History* (vol. 2), p. 73.
- ²⁰ Robert Graves & Alan Hodge, *The Long Weekend* (Hutchinson, London, 1940), p.264.
- ²¹ A. J. P. Taylor, *England*, p.335.
- ²² Pugh, *We Danced*, pp.264-5.
- ²³ Charles Loch Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940* (Methuen & Co, London, 1955), pp. 556-61, see also Gilbert, *A History* (vol. 2), pp. 70-1.
- ²⁴ *Express*, 11 Dec 1935, p. 12; 12 Dec 1935, p 12; 16 Dec 1935, p. 10; 17 Dec 1935, p. 10; & 18 Dec 1935, p. 10. *Mail*, 11 Dec 1935, p. 12; 12 Dec 1935, p. 10; 14 Dec 1935, p. 10; 16 Dec 1935, p. 12; 17 Dec 1935, p. 12, & 18 Dec 1935, p. 10. *Times*, 16 Dec 1935, p. 15.
- ²⁵ *Times*, 18 Dec 1935, p. 13. *Mail*, 18 Dec 1935, p. 10.
- ²⁶ Gilbert, *A History* (vol. 2), pp. 109-110; & Mowat, pp. 556-61. See Taylor, *The Origins*, pp. 99-105, for an assessment that points the finger at senior generals and admirals who he alleges admired Mussolini and detested the League of Nations. Taylor claims it was their deliberately incorrect assessment of the respective strengths of the Italian and Abyssinian forces that led the British Government to mishandle the situation.
- ²⁷ William R. Rock, *Appeasement On Trial* (Archon Books, Hamden, 1966), p.6.
- ²⁸ R. A. C. Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement* (Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1993), pp. 15-6.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 17-9.
- ³⁰ Mowat, pp. 564-5. Pugh, pp. 285-6. Parker, pp. 62-5. Gilbert, p.195, also stresses the influence of the *Times* in encouraging Chamberlain in pursuing the policy of appeasement.
- ³¹ Parker, p. 84.
- ³² In addition to Cockett and Rock see Cato, *Guilty Men*, (Victor Gollancz, London, 1940).

-
- ³³ Thurlow, p. 135.
- ³⁴ Mowat, p. 591.
- ³⁵ Oswald Mosley, *My Life* (Thomas Nelson & Sons, London, 1968), pp. 136 & 140.
- ³⁶ Dorril, pp. 55 & 66. Robert Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley* (Papermac, London, 1990), pp. 93-6, 122-3. Mosley, *My Life*, pp. 140-4.
- ³⁷ Oswald Mosley, *The Greater Britain – Extracts*, pp. 41-2, www.oswaldmosley.com/downloads/free-ebooks.htm. [March 2007, no longer available to download]
- ³⁸ *Blackshirt*, 7 Jun 1935, p. 2.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Skidelsky, p.425.
- ⁴¹ *Action*, 21 Aug 1937, p. 10.
- ⁴² *Action*, 2 Apr 1936, p. 7.
- ⁴³ *Fascist*, Mar 1933, p. 2.
- ⁴⁴ *Action*, 19 Mar 1938, p. 10; & 9 July 1938, p. 2. See also *Action* 19 Mar 1939, p. 10.
- ⁴⁵ *Fascist*, Nov 1933, p. 2; & Dec 1933, p. 2, this issue also described the League as a ‘standing joke.’
- ⁴⁶ Oswald Mosley, *The Greater Britain* (BUF, London, 1932), pp. 132-137.
- ⁴⁷ Oswald Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live: British Union Policy 1938* (Greater Britain publications, London, 1938), pp. 27-8, & 32.
- ⁴⁸ Nugent, pp. 145.
- ⁴⁹ Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought 1895-1914* (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1960), p. 117.
- ⁵⁰ Semmel, pp. 100 & 118.
- ⁵¹ Webber, pp.115-21.
- ⁵² *Fascist Week*, 27 Apr- 3 May 1934, pp. 2 & 5;
- ⁵³ *Blackshirt*, 1 Feb 1935, p. 6; & 15 Feb 1935, p. 6.
- ⁵⁴ *Blackshirt*, Mar 29 1935, p. 2.
- ⁵⁵ See also *Fascist Week*, 11-17 May 1934, p. 1.
- ⁵⁶ *Blackshirt*, 16 Jun 1933, pp.1 & 4.
- ⁵⁷ *Blackshirt*, 24 Jun- 1 Jul 1933, pp. 1 & 3.

-
- ⁵⁸ *Blackshirt*, Mar 29 1935, p. 2. *Fascist Week*, 2-8 Feb 1934, p. 5; 4-10 May 1934, p. 5; & 11-17 May 1934, p. 1.
- ⁵⁹ *Blackshirt*, 18 Jan 1935, p. 4.
- ⁶⁰ *Blackshirt*, 24 May 1935, pp. 1 & 6.
- ⁶¹ Oswald Mosley, *The Greater Britain*, pp. 137-138.
- ⁶² Ferguson, pp. 326-8.
- ⁶³ *Fascist Week*, 2-8 Feb 1934, p. 5. See also *Blackshirt*, 18 Jan 1935, p. 4; & 1 Feb 1935, p. 1; & 8 Feb 1935, p. 9; 20 Sep 1935, p. 2.
- ⁶⁴ *Fascist*, Sep 1933, p. 1 & 2, Aug 1934, p. 1.
- ⁶⁵ *Fascist*, Mar 1934, p. 4
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ *Blackshirt*, 19 Jul 1935, p.2, 13 Sep 1935, p.6 & 7; 20 Sep 1935, p. 2; & 4 Oct 1935, p. 2.
- ⁶⁸ *Fascist*, Oct 1935, p. 1; see also Nov 1935, p. 2.
- ⁶⁹ *Blackshirt*, 7 Jun 1935, p. 2.
- ⁷⁰ *Blackshirt*, 30 Aug, pp. 6 & 7. See also, *Blackshirt*, 13 Sep 1935, p. 1; 20 Sep 1935, p. 2; & 27 Sep 1935, p. 4.
- ⁷¹ *Blackshirt*, 30 Aug 1935, p. 5; 13 Sep 1935, pp. 3 & 6. *Action* 28 Feb 1936, p. 8; 16 Apr 1936, p. 3; & 30 April 1936, p. 6 & 7.
- ⁷² *Blackshirt*, 30 Aug, p. 6; 20 Sep 1935, p. 5; & 4 Oct 1935, p. 5.
- ⁷³ *Blackshirt*, 6 Sep 1935, p. 2 & 3.
- ⁷⁴ *Fascist*, Sep 1935, p. 1 & 2; & Nov 1935, p. 1.
- ⁷⁵ *Fascist*, Dec 1935, p. 3. Earlier, Mussolini was described as having 'Ratted' after he allowed Freemasons and Rosicrucians to hold lodge meetings and permitted four Jews to sit in the Senate, see *Fascist*, Apr 1934, p. 2.
- ⁷⁶ *Blackshirt*, 23 Aug 1935, pp. 2 & 4; 30 Aug 1935, p. 1, 5 & 6; 6 Sep 1935, pp. 1-2, & 5; & 20 Sep 1935, p. 1-2.
- ⁷⁷ *Blackshirt*, 6 Sept 1935, pp. 1,2, 4, 5 & 8; 13 Sep 1935, pp. 1& 9; 20 Sep 1935, p. 1-2; & 27 Sep 1935, pp. 1, 2; & 4 Oct 1935, p. 2.
- ⁷⁸ Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918-39: Parties, ideology and culture* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000), p.102-5. Only in east London did membership increase, and this was likely to be a result of increased antisemitic propaganda rather than the popularity of the peace campaign.

-
- ⁷⁹ *Blackshirt*, 13 Sep, p. 10; 20 Sep 1935, p. 4.
- ⁸⁰ *Blackshirt*, 6 Sep 1935, p. 1.
- ⁸¹ 49% of married women were said to have four or more children. *Action*, 12 Mar 1938, p. 4. It was also suggested that Italy was faring better than Germany, materially. *Action*, 6 Jan 1938, p. 18.
- ⁸² *Action*, 20 Jan 1938, p. 6; & 12 Feb 1938, p. 2.
- ⁸³ *Action*, 17 Sep 1938, p. 4.
- ⁸⁴ *Action*, 29 Jan 1938, p. 6.
- ⁸⁵ *Action*, 26 Feb 1938, p. 4; & 23 Jul 1938, p. 20.
- ⁸⁶ *Action*, 4 Feb 1939, p. 2. See also *Action*, 7 Jan 1939, p. 5 for an article by John Emery on the country's need for modern leaders in which he claimed that 'the only hope is British Union under the leadership of Mosley.'
- ⁸⁷ *Fascist*, Apr 1938, p. 2. See also *Action*, 20 Jan 1938, p. 9, & 12 Feb 1938, pp. 2 & 4.
- ⁸⁸ *Action*, 6 Jan 1938, p. 8.
- ⁸⁹ *Action*, 20 Jan 1938, p. 9.
- ⁹⁰ *Action*, 28 Feb 1936, p.12.
- ⁹¹ *Action*, 7 May 1936, p. 3; 19 Mar 1938, p. 1; 12 Nov 1938, p. 7; & 29 Apr 1939, p. 2. *Blackshirt*, Nov 1938, p. 6 & 8; & May 1939, p. 2, 6 & 8.
- ⁹² *Fascist*, Oct 1933, p. 2; Mar 1934, p. 2; Dec 1935, p. 2; Mar 1937, p. 3; Dec 1938, p. 2; & May 1939, p. 3.
- ⁹³ *Fascist*, Apr 1938, p. 1.
- ⁹⁴ *Action*, 19 Mar 1938, p. 5. Emery is referring to regional plebiscites conducted in 1921, for a more detailed explanation see the *Fascist*, May 1938, p. 2.
- ⁹⁵ *Action*, 19 Mar 1938, pp. 1 & 4.
- ⁹⁶ *Action*, 19 Mar 1938, p. 2.
- ⁹⁷ *Action*, 19 Mar 1938, p. 9.
- ⁹⁸ *Action*, 19 Mar 1938, p. 4.
- ⁹⁹ *Action*, 23 Apr 1938, p. 2; 30 Apr 1938, p. 1, & 14 May 1938, p. 17.
- ¹⁰⁰ Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right*, pp. 43-6 & 86.
- ¹⁰¹ Linehan cites a Special Branch report dated 16 July 1939. Linehan, *British Fascism*, p.114. Pugh, *Hurrah*, p. 286. Both Dorril and Nicholas Mosley estimate the

audience at more than 20,000. Dorril, p. 457. Nicholas Mosley, *Rules of the Game /Beyond the Pale* (Pimlico, London, 1998), p. 417.

¹⁰² *Action*, Oct 1938, p. 1.

¹⁰³ *Action*, 5 Mar 1938, p. 2; 12 Mar 1938, pp. 2 & 4; 19 Mar 1938, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ *Action*, 19 Mar 1938, p. 10; 4 Jun 1938, p. 2; & 24 Sep 1938, p. 4. *Blackshirt*, Sep 1938, pp. 2 & 6.

¹⁰⁵ *Action*, 12 Mar 1938, p. 4; 3 Sep 1938, p. 10; 24 Sep 1938, p. 11; & 18 Mar 1939.

¹⁰⁶ *Action*, 28 May 1938, p. 7. *Fascist*, Apr 1938, p. 1. The quote was used again in *Action*, 3 Sep 1938, p. 1; 24 Sep 1938, p. 2; 8 Oct 1938, p. 7; 25 Feb 1939, p. 1 & 25 Mar 1939, p. 1. Earl Winterton was an Irish peer and Conservative MP who was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster between 1937-9.

¹⁰⁷ *Fascist*, Nov 1938, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Fascist*, Apr 1939 p. 4.

¹¹⁰ *Action*, 2 Apr 1938, p. 1.

¹¹¹ *Action*, 21 May 1938, p. 3.

¹¹² *Action*, 4 Jun 1938, p. 4.

¹¹³ *Action*, 8 Oct 1938, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ *Blackshirt*, Oct 1935, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ *Action*, 24 Sep 1938, pp. 7 & 10

¹¹⁶ *Blackshirt*, Oct 1938, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ *Action*, 8 Oct 1938, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ *Action*, 24 Sep 1938

¹¹⁹ *Action*, 25 Mar 1939, p. 1 & 10.

¹²⁰ *Action*, 18 Mar 1939, p. 20.

¹²¹ *Blackshirt*, May 1939, p. 8.

¹²² *Action*, 12 Mar 1938, p. 4; 1 Oct 1938, p. 12; 25 Mar 1939, p. 10; & 14 Apr 1939, p. 10.

¹²³ *Action*, 25 Mar 1939, pp. 6 & 10.

¹²⁴ *Blackshirt*, May 1939, p. 8.

¹²⁵ *Action*, 25 Mar 1939, p. 1. See also, *Action*, 1 Apr 1939, pp. 1 & 2.

¹²⁶ *Action*, 1 Apr 1939, p. 7.

-
- ¹²⁷ *Action*, 8 Apr 1939, pp. 1, 3, 9 & 10; 15 Apr 1939, pp 4 &. 10; 22 Apr 1939, pp. 1, 3, 4, 7 & 10; 29 Apr 1939, pp. 2 7 17; 6 May 1939, p. 20; 7 Jun 1939, p. 3; 8 Jul 1939, p. 3; 22 Jul 1939, pp. 10 & 11; & 29 Jul 1939, p. 3. 16 Sep 1939, p. 5; & 30 Sep 1939, p. 5.
- ¹²⁸ *Action*, 18 Feb 1939, p. 3.
- ¹²⁹ *Action*, 8 Apr 1939, p. 17.
- ¹³⁰ *Action*, 26 Aug 1939, p. 1. See also 2 Sep 1939, p. 4.
- ¹³¹ *Action*, 2 Sep 1939, p. 8.
- ¹³² *Fascist*, May 1939, p. 1.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁴ *Fascist*, May 1939, p. 2.
- ¹³⁵ *Fascist*, Jul 1939, p. 2.
- ¹³⁶ *Fascist*, Aug 1939, p. 2.
- ¹³⁷ *Fascist*, Sep 1939, p. 1.
- ¹³⁸ *The History of the Times* vol. IV, part II (Written and published at the office of the *Times*, London, 1952), p. 896.
- ¹³⁹ *Mirror*, 10 Apr 1933, p. 12.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Express*, 4 Mar 1938, p. 10.
- ¹⁴¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 29 Jun 1935, p. 12.
- ¹⁴² Mowat, p. 542.
- ¹⁴³ *Telegraph*, 21 Feb 1933, p. 10; & 27 Feb 1933, p.10.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Times*, 24 Jan 1933, p.11; & 14 Feb 1933, p.13.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Times*, 28 Mar 1933, p. 15.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Times*, 13 Feb 1933, p. 13.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Times*, 4 Aug 1933, p. 11.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Times*, 23 Nov 1933, p. 15; & 7 Dec 1933, p. 15. See also 28 May 1934, p. 15, when the *Times* again praises the work of the League.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Times*, 4 Aug 1934, p. 11.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Express*, 30 Apr 1931, p. 10.
- ¹⁵¹ *Express*, 23 May 1932, p. 10.
- ¹⁵² *Express*, 22 Feb 1933, p.10; & 25 Feb 1933, p. 8.
- ¹⁵³ *Mail*, 6 Feb 1933, p. 10
- ¹⁵⁴ *Mail*, 16 Feb 1933, p. 10; & 22 Feb 1933, p. 10.

-
- ¹⁵⁵ *Mail*, 27 Feb 1933, p 10.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Mirror*, 28 Sep 1933, p. 11. See also *Mirror*, 26 Sep 1933, p. 4, for a report of a speech by the League's President critical of its performance, and 16 Oct 1933, p. 12, for an article by Shaw Desmond on the League's failures. Shaw Desmond was a successful novelist and in 1934 was a founder member and Vice-President of the International Institute for Psychical Research.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Mirror*, 21 Nov 1933, p. 13.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 22 Dec 1933, p. 8.
- ¹⁶⁰ Anne Chisholm & Michael Davie, *Lord Beaverbrook* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1992), pp 279-80, 288. Alan Wood, *The True History of Lord Beaverbrook* (Heinemann, London, 1965), p.185.
- ¹⁶¹ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004), p. 185.
- ¹⁶² Graves & Hodge, p. 251.
- ¹⁶³ *Mail*, 24 Sep 1930, p. 10.
- ¹⁶⁴ Chisholm & Davie, pp. 287, 289, 291 & 293.
- ¹⁶⁵ Graves & Hodge, p. 251. *Express*, 26 Sep 1930, p. 1.
- ¹⁶⁶ *Express*, 4 Sep 1930, p. 10; 17 Sep 1930, p. 10; & 23 Sep 1930, p. 10. *Mail* 1 Sep 1930, pp. 10 & 11.
- ¹⁶⁷ Chisholm & Davie, p. 305. The potent final sentence is believed to have been written by Baldwin's cousin Rudyard Kipling who had worked for Beaverbrook and was a friend of Rothermere. S. J. Taylor, *The Great Outsiders* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1996), p. 274.
- ¹⁶⁸ Chisholm & Davie, p. 306.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Express*, 15 Apr 1931, p. 8.
- ¹⁷⁰ *Express*, 12 Mar 1934, p. 12; 16 Feb 1938, p. 10; 17 Feb 1938, p. 10; & 5 Mar 1938, p. 10. *Mail*, 14 Apr 1937, p. 12
- ¹⁷¹ *Express*, 10 May 1932, p. 10; 23 May 1932, p. 10; & 16 Feb 1938, p. 10. *Mail*, 25 Apr 1934, p. 12.
- ¹⁷² *Express*, 10 Apr 1931, p. 10; & 16 Mar 1933, p. 10; 23 Apr 1937, p. 12; & 2 May 1938, p.10. *Mail*, 22 Sep 1930, p. 10; 7 Apr 1931, p.11; 13 Apr 1931, p. 10; 7 Oct 1932, p.12 & 3; 23 Mar 1934, p. 25; 16 May 1934, p. 10; & 25 Jul 1934, p. 10.

-
- ¹⁷³ *Mail*, 24 Apr 1931, p. 10; & 15 Jan 1934, p. 10.
- ¹⁷⁴ Ferguson, pp. 317-8.
- ¹⁷⁵ *Times*, 8 Aug 1929, p. 11; 9 Oct 1929, p. 15; 20 Nov 1929, p. 15; & 30 Jan 1930, p. 15.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Times*, 25 Feb 1930, p. 15.
- ¹⁷⁷ *Times*, 18 Feb 1930, p. 17; & 25 Feb 1930, p. 15.
- ¹⁷⁸ *Times*, 29 May 1930, p. 17; 2 Mar 1931, p. 13; & 30 Mar 1931, p. 13.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Telegraph*, 26 Sep 1930, p. 10; & 30 Sep 1930, p. 10. The paper was also highly critical of the attempts by the *Express* and the *Mail* to portray the reconciliation between the UEP and the Conservative party as being the result of concessions by the Conservative leadership. Beaverbrook was heavily criticised for misrepresentation. See *Telegraph*, 1 Apr 1931, pp. 12 & 13; & 10 Apr 1931, p. 10.
- ¹⁸⁰ *Times*, 28 Mar 1934, p. 15; 30 Apr 1934, p. 15; 7 Jun 1934, p. 15; 12 Nov 1934, p. 15; 20 Nov 1934, p. 15, 21 Nov 1934, p. 15; 23 Nov 1934, p. 15, 3 Dec 1934, p. 15; & 19 Mar 1935, p. 17. *Telegraph*, 18 Mar 1933, p. 12; & 15 Feb 1934, p. 12.
- ¹⁸¹ Graves & Hodge, p. 248.
- ¹⁸² Graves & Hodge, pp. 248-9.
- ¹⁸³ Graves & Hodge, p. 250.
- ¹⁸⁴ *Express*, 2 Feb 1938, p. 1; 8 Feb 1938, p. 1; & 16 Feb 1938, p. 2.
- ¹⁸⁵ *Express*, 5 Feb 1938, p. 8; 8 Feb 1938, p. 10; 12 Feb 1938, p. 10, 15 Feb 1938, p. 10.
- ¹⁸⁶ *Express*, 12 Feb 1938, p. 12.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Times*, 16 Sep 1935, p. 13; 4 Oct 1935, p. 15; 10 Oct 1935, p. 15; 11 Oct 1935, p. 15; & 15 Oct 1935, p. 15. *Telegraph*, 3 Oct 1935, p. 14; 4 Oct 1935, p. 14; 5 Oct 1935, p. 12; 10 Oct 1935, p. 14; 11 Oct 1935, p. 14; 14 Oct 1935, p. 12; & 15 Oct 1935, p. 14.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Telegraph*, 7 Oct 1935, p. xii.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Telegraph*, 7 Oct 1935, p. 12.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Times*, 12 Oct 1935, p. 13.
- ¹⁹¹ *Mail*, 1 Oct 1935, p. 12; 2 Oct 1935, p. 10; 3 Oct 1935, p. 12; 4 Oct 1935, p. 12; 10 Oct 1935, p. 12; 14 Oct 1935, p. 12; 15 Oct 1935, p. 12; 16 Oct 1935, p. 12; & 18 Oct 1935, p. 14.
- ¹⁹² *Mail*, 4 Oct 1935, p. 12.

-
- ¹⁹³ *Express*, 5 Oct 1935, p. 10.
- ¹⁹⁴ *Express*, 7 Oct 1935, p. 10; 8 Oct 1935, p. 12; & 7 Dec 1935, p. 10. See 9 Oct 1935, p. 4 for reports of Italy using gas bombs.
- ¹⁹⁵ Richard Cockett, *Twilight of Truth* (George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1989), pp. 31 & 189.
- ¹⁹⁶ Cockett, pp. 39-42.
- ¹⁹⁷ Cockett, p. 42. The actual date of the *Times* editorial is 29 Nov 1937, p. 15 and not 1938 as Cockett says.
- ¹⁹⁸ *Times*, 2 Dec 1937, p. 15; & 3 Dec 1937, p. 17.
- ¹⁹⁹ Andrew Roberts, *The Holy Fox: The Life Of Lord Halifax* (Phoenix, London, 1997), pp. 19, 25, 92, & 109.
- ²⁰⁰ John Evelyn Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (Hutchinson, London, 1955), pp. 152, 215, 218, 359, & 373.
- ²⁰¹ Cockett, pp. 27, 42-3 & 189.
- ²⁰² *Telegraph*, 8 Mar 1938, p. 15.
- ²⁰³ *Telegraph*, 23 Nov 1938, p. 14.
- ²⁰⁴ *Times*, 10 Feb 1938, p. 14; 11 Feb 1938, p. 14.
- ²⁰⁵ *Times*, 12 Mar 1938, p. 13.
- ²⁰⁶ *Times*, 14 Mar 1938, p. 15; & 21 Mar 1938, p. 13.
- ²⁰⁷ *Telegraph*, 12 Mar 1938, p. 14; & 15 Mar 1938, p. 16.
- ²⁰⁸ *Telegraph*, 1 Oct 1938, p. 12.
- ²⁰⁹ *Telegraph*, 3 Oct 1938, p. 10.
- ²¹⁰ *Telegraph*, 4 Oct 1938, p. 16.
- ²¹¹ *Telegraph*, 12 Dec 1938, p. 12.
- ²¹² *Telegraph*, 14 Dec 1938, p. 14; 15 Dec 1938, p. 14; 20 Dec 1938, pp. 14 & 15.
- ²¹³ *Telegraph*, 13 Oct 1938, p. 10; 7 Nov 1938, p. 14; 8 Dec 1938, p. 15, 12 Dec 1938, p. 11; 14 Dec 1938, p. 14; & 16 Dec 1938, p. 11.
- ²¹⁴ *Telegraph*, 17 Mar 1939, p. 16; 18 Mar 1939, p. 14; 12 Jun 1939, p. 12; 26 Jun 1939, p. 12; & 29 Aug 1939, p. 10.
- ²¹⁵ *Telegraph*, 7 Feb 1939, p. 14; 16 Feb 1939, p. 14; 23 Mar 1939, p. 16; 30 Mar 1939, p. 16; & 31 Mar 1939, p. 16;
- ²¹⁶ *Telegraph*, 20 Mar 1939, p. 12; 25 Mar 1939, p. 14; 29 Mar 1939, p. 16; & 30 Jun 1939, p. 14.

-
- ²¹⁷ *Telegraph*, 18 Aug 1939, p. 12; 23 Aug 1939, p. 12; 25 Aug 1939, p. 12; 28 Aug 1939, p. 8; 29 Aug 1939, p. 10; 30 Aug 1939, p. 10; & 31 Aug 1939, p. 10.
- ²¹⁸ *Telegraph*, 21 Aug 1939, p. 12; 24 Aug 1939, p. 12; 29 Aug 1939, p. 10; & 30 Aug 1939, p. 10.
- ²¹⁹ *Mirror*, 12 Mar 1938, p. 11; 14 Mar 1938, p. 13 & 15.
- ²²⁰ *Mail*, 12 Mar 1938, p. 8.
- ²²¹ *Mail* 21 Nov 1938, p. 12.
- ²²² *Mail*, 23 Feb 1939, p. 12.
- ²²³ *Express*, 16 Feb 1938, p. 10.
- ²²⁴ *Express*, 17 Feb 1938, p. 10.
- ²²⁵ *Express*, 12 Mar 1938, p. 12.
- ²²⁶ *Express*, 28 Mar 1938, p. 10.
- ²²⁷ *Mail*, 7 Feb 1938, p. 10; & 15 Mar 1938, pp. 13 -4.
- ²²⁸ *Express*, 4 Feb 1938, p. 1; 5 Feb 1938, p. 1; & 7 Feb 1932, p. 10. *Express*, 15 Mar 1938, p. 2; & 16 Mar 1938, p. 2.
- ²²⁹ *Express*, 5 Feb 1938, p. 1; 7 Feb 1938, p. 2; & 12 Feb 1938, p. 10.
- ²³⁰ *Express*, 5 Feb 1938, p. 8.
- ²³¹ *Express*, 7 Feb 1938, p. 10.
- ²³² *Express*, 11 Feb 1938, p. 10; 12 Feb 1938, p. 2; 7 Mar 1938, p. 9; 8 Mar 1938, p. 5; 14 Mar 1938, p. 12; & 28 Mar 1938, p. 7.
- ²³³ *Mail*, 4 Mar 1938, p. 12. For similar sentiments see *Express*, 5 Apr 1938, p. 10; 14 Mar 1938, p. 12; 17 Mar 1938, p. 110; 30 Apr 1938, p. 10; & 30 Apr 1938, p. 10.
- ²³⁴ *Express*, 14 Mar 1938, p. 12, 18 Mar 1938, p. 1; & 21 Mar 1938, p. 10.
- ²³⁵ *Express*, 15 Nov 1938, p. 12.
- ²³⁶ *Express*, 21 Nov 1938, p. 12.
- ²³⁷ *Express*, 14 Mar 1939, p. 10. *Mail*, 15 Mar 1939, p. 12.
- ²³⁸ *Express*, 15 Mar 1939, p. 12. *Mail*, 16 Mar 1939, p. 12.
- ²³⁹ *Mail*, 21 Aug 1939, p. 8.
- ²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴² *Mail*, 23 Aug 1939, p. 10; 25 Aug 1939, p. 8; & 30 Aug 1939, p. 8. See also 22 Aug 1939, p. 8; 24 Aug 1939, p. 8, 28 Aug 1939, p. 8; 29 Aug 1939, p. 8 & 31 Aug 1939, p. 8.

-
- ²⁴³ *Express*, 1 Aug 1939, p. 10, & 15 Aug 1939, p. 8.
- ²⁴⁴ *Express*, 4 Aug 1939, p. 8
- ²⁴⁵ *Express*, 4 Aug 1939, p. 8.
- ²⁴⁶ *Express*, 15 Aug 1939, p. 8.
- ²⁴⁷ *Express*, 26 Aug 1939, p. 8.
- ²⁴⁸ *Express*, 2 Sep 1939, p. 8.
- ²⁴⁹ Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right*, pp 121-2.
- ²⁵⁰ *Action*, 19 Mar 1938, pp 10 & 11; 3 Sep 1938, p. 10; & 24 Sep 1938, p. 11.
Blackshirt, Sep 1939, pp. 2 & 6.
- ²⁵¹ *Action*, 26 Feb 1938, p.2; 2 Mar 1938, p. 4; 19 Mar 1938, p. 4; 7 May 1938, p. 4;
& 4 Jun 1938, p. 2; 18 Jun 1938, p. 3; 1 Oct 1938, p. 12; 8 Oct 1938, p.10; 25 Mar
1939, p. 10; & 15 Apr 1939, p. 10. *Blackshirt*, May 1939, p. 8. *Fascist*, Aug 1939, p.
2.
- ²⁵² *Action*, 26 Mar 1938, p. 5; 2 Apr 1938, p. 1; 3 Sep 1938, p. 1; 24 Sep 1938, p. 11.
Blackshirt, Apr 1938, p. 4; Oct 1938, p. 5; 8 Apr 1939, p. 1; & 15 Apr 1939, p. 9.
Fascist, Sep 1938, pp. 1 & 2; Nov 1938, p. 1; Apr 1939, p. 1 & 3-4 & May 1939, p. 2.
- ²⁵³ *Blackshirt*, May 1939, p. P.1. *Action*, 7 Jan 1939, p. 5; 14 Jan 1939, p. 8; 11 Feb
1939, p p. 3 & 4; & 18 Feb 1939, p. 3.

DECADENCE, DECLINE, AND RENEWAL - BRITISH CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

According to J. B. Bury, the theory of human progress is predicated on a view of history that sees humanity slowly and continually advancing in a definite and desirable direction.¹ During the interwar period there were many who doubted the validity of that theory. Cultural pessimism, a profound belief that a nation or civilisation is in a continuing state of decline that cannot be reversed, resonated with many who perceived that liberal principles had failed, resulting in a decadent and weak society devoid of meaning.² Developing out of *fin-de-siècle* anti-rationalism, the cultural pessimist movement had deep roots in Germany and fostered a reaction by the traditional elite against modernity. The unitary worldview of cultural pessimists recognised the validity of only one set of beliefs or values and perceived these as fundamental to the social institutions and cultural life of the nation, sustaining its identity and organic wholeness. The educated elite saw themselves as interpreting the national culture and identity, and acted as guardians against an encroaching modernity that embodied a plurality of meaning and promoted a coercive individuality together with utilitarian values such as wealth, power and status that resulted in complete spiritual enervation. To revitalise the nation and restore its organic unity would require a transformation of society.³

In Britain there were also significant numbers who shared these views, for example the Dean of St. Paul's, W. R. Inge, regarded the concept of 'progress' as

a 'pernicious superstition', and H. A. L. Fisher argued that he could discern no pattern or meaning in the study of history.⁴ Dan Stone has also identified a widespread sense of cultural pessimism among members of the 'Back to the Land' movement. The movement was a response to a perception that rapid changes in modern society threatened Britain's traditional patterns of social and cultural life.⁵

According to Thomas Linehan, cultural regeneration was as significant an element in British fascism as the need for economic or political change.⁶ Nietzsche, Bergson, Sorel, Le Bon and Spengler were among those who inspired British fascists' understanding of culture. The works of British writers such as Coleridge, Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris were also influential.⁷ Recent work by Tony Collins, Martin Durham, Julie Gottlieb, Michael Spurr and others has advanced our understanding of the cultural forces at work within and upon British fascist organisations.⁸ Careful study of the fascist press shows it was the perception of Britain as a nation in decline, losing its pre-eminence on the world stage, and abandoning its traditional core values that provided the essential impetus motivating British fascists. This chapter will concentrate on the cultural aspects of the ideology and policy of British fascists, examining, in particular, their analysis of a perceived national descent into decadence, apathy and lethargy, and the remedy they prescribed to reverse that decline. The degree of difference between the constrained cultural mores of the British fascists and the relatively varied cultural perceptions represented in the mainstream press suggests that the fascists' cultural pessimism did not strike a chord with the public and this reinforced a tendency within British fascism, particularly so in the case of the BUF, to define itself increasingly in opposition to mainstream society.

THE FASCIST CULTURAL DIAGNOSIS

A nation in decline

All British fascist groups subscribed to the notion that Britain was threatened by a rising tide of decadence, a failure of masculine vitality, and a lack of respect for traditional values. Throughout the inter-war period, concerned at the apathetic unawareness of the general public, the fascist press made every effort to promulgate the message that Britain was decaying, decadent, and approaching a crisis that only fascism could resolve.⁹ During the 1920s the BF's President, Brigadier General R. B. D. Blakeney, while obsessed with communism and Jewish conspiracy theories, was concerned that internationalism was a subtle means of sapping national virility.¹⁰ The *Fascist Bulletin* demanded a return to 'VIRILITY' in order to

put an end to the disease that has brought us to our present deplorable condition. Softness, sentimentalism, flabby compromise ... are amongst the many symptoms of the malady.¹¹

There was, however, no intellectual underpinning to the allegations of decadence and decline published in *Fascist Bulletin*, as these were largely based on the observations of Blakeney himself.

Similarly the perceptions of cultural decline articulated in the pages of the *Fascist* were mainly the result of Leese's obsession with antisemitism, though this was supplemented with a little Social Darwinism and the racial theories of the German social anthropologist, Hans K. Günther, and the British archaeologist, Lieutenant Colonel L. A. Waddell. Leese simplified Waddell's theories for the *Fascist's* readers and claimed the natural nobility of the Nordics led them to treat

other races as equals, which, coupled with interbreeding, inevitably led to the rebellion of the lower races.¹² The logic of this process was not fully explained.

The BUF advanced a more reasoned diagnosis of Britain's cultural decline. Heavily influenced by Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, first published in Germany in 1918 and in England in 1926, the BUF and its press adopted an organic concept of culture. Spengler's influence can also be seen in BUF attitudes to democracy, liberalism, the arts, the city, authoritarian leadership, the 'Will to Power', barbarism, and the media.¹³ Linehan points out, however, that the BUF did not share Spengler's pessimistic view that Western Civilisation could not be rejuvenated.¹⁴

Evidence of decline and decadence in Britain was regularly provided in articles in *Blackshirt* and *Action*. The BUF's interpretation of Spengler's theories placed the First World War as the pivotal factor in Britain's descent into decadence. The first issue of *Blackshirt* contained an article blaming 'our rulers' for the declining state of the nation:

They have failed to realise that they laid their world in ruins in 1914, and that it is gone beyond all possibility of revival. The post-war world is ours, not theirs! Only the deadheads will not surrender what used to be their stronghold. They prefer England to crumble into dust under their rule rather than let somebody else start salvage operations.¹⁵

The article drew on a significant feature of the fascist perception of corruption and decline in Britain: the betrayal of the sacrifices made by soldiers and their families during the First World War. This issue attracted many former veterans of the Great War to fascism, including A. K. Chesterton and Henry Williamson, who had both been traumatised by their experience of war.¹⁶ The promises of 'homes fit for heroes' and the social progress implied in the extension of the franchise was mocked by the reality of life in the 1930s for many ex-servicemen and their

families.¹⁷ Chesterton wrote of the betrayal of the warrior-dead, and the 'outrage and affront to the memory of [their] sacrifice.'¹⁸ T. P. Moran also expressed concerns for war veterans whose disillusionment grew as 'year by year their condition has become more hopeless and they and their dependants more poverty-stricken.'¹⁹ The fascist press was keen to exploit what it perceived as widespread disenchantment.

British manhood

During the Boer War the number of men unfit for military service was such that imperial prowess and national efficiency were threatened, leading to state intervention to improve the vitality of the nation's men. Joanna Bourke describes these events as a political crisis of masculinity.²⁰ In the aftermath of the First World War masculinity was perceived by some to be threatened in a more personal and individual way. Men's place in society was less secure than previously; their role as breadwinners was undermined by economic depression, industrial rationalisation, labour unrest and the increasing confidence of women in politics and the labour market. The stress on masculinity by British fascists during the inter-war period could be regarded as reasserting the role of men in a society undergoing rapid change. Throughout the period there was a continued emphasis on men's physical fitness. As late as 1937 a cartoon in *Action* showed three out of four army recruits as undernourished or unfit.²¹

In the 1920s the BF had been deeply concerned at the alleged spread of degeneracy among men whose vitality was sapped by erotomania and neurasthenia: 'Our most urgent necessity at the moment is for a revival of masculinity and a clean, healthy outlook on life.'²² The BF feared that England

was 'in danger of becoming a drooping, lifeless plant,' lacking a virile and aggressive patriotism capable of heroic self-sacrifice: 'We have a kind of sleepy sexless patriotism.'²³ Men needed to be physically fit in order to meet the drive of their natural instinct, as 'in man the instinct is born to secure the safety of the tribe.'²⁴

Fascists regarded physical weakness as feminine and the attribution of what they considered female characteristics as an insult. Hence members of the Government and other political opponents were portrayed as women, often old women.²⁵ The IFL was also concerned about the 'effeminate policy' adopted by the Government.²⁶ Within the BUF, great emphasis was placed on virility and masculinity as driving forces in the nation's achievements. Chesterton referred to the 'great creative urge of the masculine spirit.'²⁷ For his part, G. de Burgh Wilmot believed that masculinity was being stifled and complained that 'today ... "men" are ashamed to be men.'²⁸ For Wilmot 'man' and 'warrior' were synonymous, and it was time that the voices of men were heard 'above the squeak and gibber of effeminate cowards and shameless decadents.'²⁹ The masculinity promoted by the BUF emphasised male bonding; one story in *Action* told the tale of two close friends who fought bitterly and bloodily over a girl. The story ends with a vaguely homoerotic air as the exhausted men decided that 'wenches don't amount to much' and clasped each other's hands.³⁰

The problem with young people today...

Concerns about the fitness of British men to meet the challenges of the modern age were also reflected in attitudes to young people. Julie Gottlieb has suggested that there is some truth in the BUF claims that there was an atmosphere of crisis

in relation to masculinity, and that part of this was a concern that young men were growing up without a strong sense of what it meant to be a man.³¹ The BUF proclaimed that only fascism understood youth, and youth would play an integral part in saving the nation from communism. Weaknesses in the education system were viewed as contributing significantly to the dilemma in which young men found themselves and the League of Nations was alleged to be responsible for the ‘world of unreal and idyllic calm around the youth of today, which had led to pacifism and a disinterest in their country.’³²

Fascists saw the post-war generation as decadent and undeserving of the privileges and freedoms made possible by the sacrifices of those who endured the horrors of the First World War.³³ *Blackshirt* claimed that:

True Fascists realise that the present craze for relaxing and pleasure will make the young generation as ignorant as the old ... The obsession for spectatorial sport forms a grave national danger ... Citizenship is an ACTIVE not a passive state.³⁴

Action also advised against being a spectator rather than a participant.³⁵ Although the *Blackshirt* acknowledged that ‘the steady British character’ was more able to withstand the temptations of immorality and debauchery than other nations there was concern that the nation’s youth were overindulging in entertainment and drink to such an extent that the morale of the nation was being undermined.³⁶

Similarly, the IFL believed that ‘Post-war Society had forgotten the meaning of “Noblesse Oblige,” and ...require[d] to be taught a lesson.’³⁷ However, according to Leese, it was not the fault of Britain’s youth that there was a ‘steadily declining standard of honesty in thought and action among the people of this country’; it was the lowering of social standards that permitted Jewish influence to dominate that had led to the degeneration of British youth.³⁸ The BF also thought that the young were particularly vulnerable to exploitation: ‘Youths

often think it rather fine to hold extreme views ...³⁹ However, once the British worker 'gets over the vagaries of youth' he could be relied on as a true patriot.⁴⁰

Dangerous women

Women working outside the home were considered to have a deleterious effect on the rearing of children and, consequently, on the nation. Martin Durham, quoting the author and feminist Winifred Holtby, points out that fascism attempted to restrict women's opportunities and to disadvantage them politically and economically 'in the sacred names of marriage and maternity.'⁴¹ Evidence from the British fascist press confirms Holtby's assessment. The IFL considered that women were not suitable for public life, as they had 'little or no creative idea.'⁴² A woman's primary focus was her children, which meant she was unfitted for public life: 'The instinct of women is to secure the safety of her children, and, if she can, her husband; it cannot act otherwise than to narrow her outlook.'⁴³ Leese was convinced that women's place was firmly in the home and it was there they would 'find their true employment once more.'⁴⁴ The IFL opposed the payment of 'doles' to women on the grounds that they should be maintained by their husbands or parents, or take domestic work.⁴⁵ The BUF, again showing the influence of Spengler, also thought that the tendency of women to ignore their destiny as wives and mothers threatened the stability of the state and the future of the race.⁴⁶ Raven Thomson, bemoaning the fact that unemployment among women had decreased more than among men, claimed that women were undercutting men in the workplace.⁴⁷ In an ideal, that is fascist, world there would be no need for married women to work.⁴⁸

The restrictions British fascists sought to impose on women's lives were not confined to their activities outside the family. Birth control was frequently attacked in the pages of the *Fascist* on the grounds that it represented 'racial suicide.'⁴⁹ In 1936, Mosley had also claimed that contraception was not in the national interest.⁵⁰ The IFL regarded marriage and the raising of a large family as the ideal state for both men and women, although Leese and his wife had no children. Roles within the family were clearly and inflexibly defined:

No man worthy of the name will be governed by a woman; but all men need the help and influence of women; unmarried men and unmarried women are not living the normal life; it is the married who are normal.⁵¹

It seems clear that British fascists viewed the behaviour of women as a potential threat to national stability that needed to be curbed.

Anti-urbanism

Concerns regarding the failing virility of the nation's manhood and the baleful influence of intellectuals were also linked to anti-urbanism and the BUF expressed a distrust of city life that was seen as separating city dwellers from the traditions of rural life that had previously sustained them. Again the influence of Spengler is clear. City life, it was claimed, drained the vitality of, and encouraged effeminacy in, its residents; promoted materialism and disrupted an individual's moral and spiritual compass.⁵² Towns and cities were described as 'already over-populated' and unable to meet the needs of former country folk who were left to 'drift into semi-starvation.'⁵³ Those who grew up in the cities were 'undersized and under-developed' and prone to mental and physical illnesses.⁵⁴ Henry Gibbs claimed that Britain was breeding criminals, because in many places, including London and the depressed areas, children had insufficient food and had resorted

to stealing.⁵⁵ The BUF's anti-urbanism corresponds to the 'negative' strand of the back-to-the-land movement, identified by Dan Stone. There is a notable degree of convergence between both groups, especially in their perception of the threat posed by the inherent dysgenic capacity of those living in cramped, dirty cities.⁵⁶ Jews were considered by both to be a particular danger.

Degeneration of the arts and culture

British fascists were also keenly concerned by developments in the arts and popular culture. Reflecting their obsession with order and control in all aspects of society, British fascists demanded form, clarity and a manifestation of beauty and integrity in artistic and cultural expression.⁵⁷ The nature of culture and the role of the arts in a fascist state were closely debated in fascist circles during the inter-war period. In the BUF some, including de Burgh Wilmot, subscribed to the Göring school of cultural appreciation; others found inspiration in 'great' works of literature, music and art. De Burgh Wilmot had demanded that all culture be destroyed on the grounds that it was all decadent and unmanly, a dangerous disease.⁵⁸ This was disputed by Edwin C. Cornforth, writing in *Blackshirt* who, while accepting that 'modern' culture was degenerate, argued that the 'Greeks, the greatest athletes of all time, were also the greatest artists.'⁵⁹ According to George L. Mosse, establishing a link between fascism and classical images of masculinity was often a way for fascists to define masculinity and male beauty while avoiding homoeroticism.⁶⁰ Sharing Spengler's view that the arts had become specialised and were remote from the reality of most people's lives, Theo Lang argued that politics had become detached from the arts and from 'the culture of man.' He declared the BUF's devotion to the cultural heritage of the nation

and looked forward to a time when the state would be able to utilise the nation's cultural power. Characteristically, he was vague as to how this was to be achieved.⁶¹ Anne Cutmore, a frequent contributor to the BUF press, also sprang to the defence of 'culture', by which she meant works such as 'the paintings of Brangwyn, the sculpture of Jagger, and the music of Delius.' She deplored de Burgh Wilmot's inability to differentiate between what was worthwhile and what was not:

Are we to destroy all the works of art in Great Britain, or the little muddled streams of forced and warped thinking emanating from the long-haired men and sandaled women in Bloomsbury's dirtier boarding-houses?⁶²

Bloomsbury loomed large in the BUF's diagnosis of cultural decline. Interestingly, some members of the Bloomsbury set believed that 'people of action', with a will to power and a drive to dominate and impose themselves, were compensating for a lack of artistic expression and constituted a threat to the traditional elitist perception of culture.⁶³ The BUF shared Spengler's view that Enlightenment principles led to a detachment from the real world, which in turn led to artifice and physical and spiritual exhaustion. Hence intellectual activity was viewed with suspicion. Disdain for the 'Intelligentsia' and 'clever' people cut off from reality was clearly expressed.⁶⁴ As with other opponents of fascism, attempts were made to emasculate intellectuals figuratively.⁶⁵ In addition to attacking their masculinity fascists often referred to the Bloomsbury Set as some sort of virus or disease infecting the body of the nation.⁶⁶

If there was heated debate about the value of culture in national life there was certainly consensus among British fascists regarding the work of the sculptor Jacob Epstein. Frank Leslie, in an article calling for censorship of modern art to prevent damage to the morale of the nation, described Epstein's sculptures as

absurdities and allegorical monstrosities.⁶⁷ H. C. Daniel considered them representations of gross materialism, a debased and immoral form.⁶⁸ Referring to Epstein's *Christ*, Chesterton complained that 'in the Christian belief God created man in his own image. Epstein seems to have reversed the process.'⁶⁹ An article in *Action* threatened to remove all 'his monstrosities' from Britain.⁷⁰

British fascists approached popular culture with great caution. The concept of leisure does not sit well in the fascist mindset and they regarded entertainment for its own sake as too frivolous for the vanguard of the fascist revolution. The BF distrusted the cinema, considering it as alien-controlled and 'artfully utilised to give at least some impulse on the revolutionary path during the course of an evening.'⁷¹ Similarly, the IFL regarded the film industry as Jewish controlled.⁷² 'Junius', writing in the *Blackshirt*, described Jewish influence in the cinema as a threat to British international prestige, particularly in the Empire, and claimed that British films could be successful if the Jews were cleared out of the industry.⁷³ The weekly newsreels also came in for criticism, and Fox Movietone News were accused of censoring their content in response to pressure from Jewish interests.⁷⁴ British fascists also deplored the American domination of the cinema and complained that many films sneered at sex and motherhood.⁷⁵ 'Alien' films were said to exploit viewers' animal instincts.⁷⁶

Linehan has linked much of the British fascists' attitude to the cinema to the discourse of cultural elitism and its critique of the mass media.⁷⁷ Cinema was perceived as a method of escaping the realities of post-war life, luring the population into a hedonistic avoidance of their duty to the nation in the fascist battle against decadence and decline. More dangerously, British fascists believed, the cinema not only distracted young people from the ideals of duty and service, it

also corrupted and perverted them.⁷⁸ Excessive eroticism, the glorification of criminals and the distortion of history were all identified as factors contributing to the undermining of moral values and a proper respect for authority.⁷⁹

Similarly, the BBC was regarded as being under ‘alien’ influence, producing radio programmes that did not reflect the listeners’ interests.⁸⁰ Fascists complained that there were too few British performers on the radio, and the majority of the programmes were so dreary that many listeners were switching to the more cheerful music of continental stations.⁸¹ The broadcasting of a Bessarabian orchestra particularly incensed one fascist critic.⁸²

The fascist press presented a picture of Britain as a country in decline, reeling under a combined assault on its traditional values and culture from degenerates, intellectuals, socialists, and misguided women, whose activities served to weaken the nation and advance Jewish interests.

THE FASCIST PRESCRIPTION

Revitalising the nation

Fully subscribing to fascism’s paligenetic myth, British fascists believed only they could regenerate and revitalise the nation.⁸³ Despite their heartfelt commitment to a perception of Britain as a nation in terminal decline, a perception that drew deeply on Spengler’s vision of Western Civilisation, they remained equally committed to the optimistic belief that fascism would rescue Britain. This departure from Spengler’s thinking can be seen as resulting from fascism’s inherent belief in revolutionary rebirth. Roger Griffin explains fascist analysis as based on a cyclical rather than linear perception of time.⁸⁴ As the situation worsened, the time of renewal came closer.

British fascists insisted that national renewal could be achieved only through sacrifice and service, a belief that was shared by embryonic fascist groups such as the English Mystery and the English Array.⁸⁵ The IFL proclaimed that '[t]rue civilisation by its very nature demands discipline and a certain sacrifice of personal liberty in return for greater blessings.'⁸⁶ The acknowledged aim of democratic civilisation was to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number, but for fascists these perceptions were illusory, real progress was made possible only by the rejection of materialism and acceptance of a life of sacrifice and service. The *Fascist Bulletin* made clear to members that fascism entailed 'personal service and self-denial' and that to merit the title 'Fascist', members had 'to sacrifice something for the cause, to *work* for it, and to get something done!'⁸⁷ The IFL called for the '[f]ormation of a new governing caste of character and service.'⁸⁸ In a *Blackshirt* article headlined 'Liberal Thought Is Spiritual Slavery', Cornforth argued that 'submitting to the discipline of principles of life greater and wider than our personal desires' leads to true freedom.⁸⁹ For E. D. Randall there was a mystical, even religious, element to the sacrifice and self-denial demanded by fascism, 'the Blackshirt lives his creed' and 'the creed we serve teaches us that struggle is ennobling and that its action on the soul of man imparts a sacramental strength.' Chesterton reminded BUF members that they were dedicated to the 'sweat and agony of labour' and the building of the fascist state was 'the cardinal purpose of their lives.'⁹⁰ The standard of living to be enjoyed in a future fascist state would depend on the service an individual gave to the state. 'Paradoxical as it may seem, freedom is dependent on self-sacrifice.'⁹¹

Both the IFL and the BUF saw the state as transcending social divisions and envisioned a future fascist Britain as a classless meritocracy based, in the case of

the IFL, on an aristocracy of ‘character, service and brains’ with the emphasis on ‘character’ rather than ‘brains.’⁹² The qualification reflects the movement’s distrust of intellectuals. The BUF claimed to rely on a combination of patriotism and talent to ensure that ‘[o]pportunity shall be open to all, but privilege to none.’ Position and reward were to be restricted to those with talent who served the state, without regard to class.⁹³ The concept of the fascist state as a meritocracy was repeatedly stressed:

He or she who works the hardest, and best serves the state, will receive the greatest benefits, but no man will be allowed to acquire or control, by luck, accident, or fraud huge fortunes which necessarily impoverish the rest of the nation.⁹⁴

Loyalty to Britain was the acid test, ‘in this matter as in all others, we know no class distinction.’⁹⁵ Again and again the BUF stressed this alleged lack of class division.⁹⁶ The corporate state was to provide the mechanisms for class co-operation.

There was a belief in comradeship and classlessness that was born out of a romanticised perception of the experience of the First World War, and the BUF were keen to stress that in the Blackshirt movement ‘[m]en of all ages and types and classes come gladly together, just as in the war ...’⁹⁷ Though the author of fascist songs such as *Mosley* and *Britain Awake*, the young Blackshirt E. D. Randall, was unlikely to have had any first-hand experience of the comradeship of the trenches he was inspired by the idea it represented, declaring:

We are proud to lead the vanguard
Of the Nation’s risen youth,
In the classless revolution,
In the comradeship of truth.⁹⁸

The wearing of a uniform was seen as a sign that class was irrelevant in fascism. The IFL defended the wearing of a uniform as it was cheap, comfortable

and smart, as well as testing the courage of new recruits who had to wear it ‘in the face of public ignorance.’⁹⁹ For the BUF, the uniform, particularly the black shirt, represented something almost mystical; it was a symbol of unity, comradeship and classlessness, signifying the modernity and strength of the movement.¹⁰⁰ The BUF was insistent that the wearing of the black shirt broke down class barriers; certainly, it symbolised the movement’s anti-liberalism and the submersion of the individual.¹⁰¹ Philip M. Coupland has shown, however, that there were a variety of uniform styles and insignia reflecting the complex hierarchy of the BUF. According to the BUF these differences represented only the degree of service given to the cause, but the quality and type of material used varied considerably. The BUF itself sold two classes of shirt, some members had their shirts tailor made, and Mosley was said to wear silk.¹⁰² Despite the rhetoric, class still mattered in the BUF.¹⁰³

The New Man

The uniform also heightened the masculine image of British fascists who continually emphasised aspects of masculinity relating to strength, hardness and fortitude. While their opponents were portrayed as weak, soft and feminine the fascists themselves were always shown as hard, vigorous, and determined looking. For British fascists the revival of masculinity underpinned national renewal. One Royal Navy cadet prescribed fascism as the answer to feeble leadership: ‘Fascism is the embodiment of what our calling needs – *manhood in authority*.’¹⁰⁴

The revitalisation of the nation would not be an easy task and violence and aggression were perceived as healthy expressions of the male character.

Chesterton described the 'Blackshirt legions' as 'the soldiers of Britain's civic life.'¹⁰⁵ The BUF maintained a low-key admiration for what it saw as the robust methods of continental fascism. There was tolerance of the 'boyish brutality of the young Nazis' and the penalties of the rod and castor oil, and sound spanking.¹⁰⁶ A later article by 'Lucifer' commented on the fear of the parliamentary parties at events in Germany, adding 'even now the faint odour of castor-oil is wafted to them in their dreams.'¹⁰⁷ In a similar vein Randall turned criticism of the BUF's reputation for violence into a positive characteristic: 'We glory in our unsubtlety, in our vital sanity.' He celebrated their reputation as thugs and louts 'if these words mean that we are proud to be men, fearless in fight, dauntless in faith, steadfast in comradeship and resolute in allegiance!'¹⁰⁸

The ideal of manhood was not easily achieved and preparation for the struggle to come included physical training and sporting activity. *Blackshirt* called on BUF members to 'live like athletes.'¹⁰⁹ The BUF was keen that members be 'players not spectators.'¹¹⁰ In a report from a BUF summer camp, Howard French, described the men as physically and mentally fit, 'their bodies are tanned, their muscles are supple and their minds are in tune.'¹¹¹ However, photographs of BUF members in swimwear taken at various summer camps do not confirm this assessment.¹¹² Michael Spurr has noted the significance of sport for the BUF in defining both the male and national identity, pointing to Mosley's claims that sportsmanship and athleticism were integral to fascism. Spurr develops the argument, posited earlier by Tony Collins, that by emphasising the BUF's adherence to the mainstream sporting ethos of 'Muscular Christianity' as promoted in public schools, youth organisations and the 'Boy's Own' type of publication, while contrasting this with their continued denigration of Jewish

sportsmanship, the BUF attempted to identify itself with accepted constructs of British masculinity and morality. The emphasis on sportsmanship allowed the BUF to create a specifically British image of fascist masculinity, distinct from that of Italy and Germany.¹¹³

Revolutionary youth

Concurrent with their attempt to create a distinctly British form of fascist masculinity, the BUF was adamant that British youth needed to be inspired with British ideals. They were convinced that schools were failing to provide that inspiration, and consequently the education system needed to be adapted to prepare young Britons for the challenges of the twentieth century.¹¹⁴ *Blackshirt* advocated a revolutionary new education policy for boys up to the age of eighteen, however, there was no mention of education for girls. Until they reached the age of seven boys were to be introduced only to play and amusement, although their nutrition and general health would be monitored. Between seven and fourteen they would devote their time to developing their physique, playing non-competitive games, swimming, reading, writing, and drawing. At fourteen academic study would be introduced and the decision as to whether the youth would go into a trade or the professions would be made and his education tailored accordingly.¹¹⁵ Physical education for youth seemed to be a priority within the BUF and the Government's failure to implement an effective system of physical training in schools was berated.¹¹⁶ The BUF also promoted the Blackshirt camps, stressing that boys who grew up under the inspiration of Mosley's leadership would not neglect Britain.

A woman's place

Gottlieb's insightful analysis of women in British fascist movements highlights the important role of women in the BUF. Their enthusiasm was a significant factor in the growth of the movement and, in its attempts to escape the political margins, the BUF depended heavily on their support. Theoretically, the BUF adopted a more progressive attitude to women than their German and Italian counterparts, though Gottlieb suggests that support for female empowerment was unlikely to have continued in practice.¹¹⁷ Indeed, developments within the BUF itself support the view that, in practice, attitudes to women were more reactionary than in theory. Between 1935 and 1938 some of the women who held office in BUF, including the chief organiser of the Women's Section, Mary Richardson, prospective parliamentary candidate, Sylvia Morris, and the BUF North West London organiser, H. Carrington-Wood, became disillusioned with the BUF's dictatorial internal structure.¹¹⁸ During this period the Women's Section was increasingly marginalised by what Gottlieb has described as 'the BUF's male-youth-gang mentality and [its] reactive masculinism.'¹¹⁹

Certainly, in relation to women's issues, the content of the BUF press during the late 1930s did not reflect a vibrant and progressive movement. The subject of education for girls received scant attention, though Anne Brock-Griggs, the BUF Women's Propaganda Officer, did argue that they should be educated up to the age of fifteen and not allowed to leave school at fourteen to help at home or take up employment. She made the case that raising the school age was 'vital, not only for the sake of our children, who must be trained for future citizenship, but also for the welfare of the community as a whole.'¹²⁰ The type of education to be provided was not specified, but clearly girls were to be trained to serve the nation.

Brock-Griggs, while stressing the importance of women in the corporate state, was frequently vague as to the specifics of their role.¹²¹ They would be able to influence the fixing of wages and prices, through their representation on the industrial corporation, but how much influence they would have compared to that of the employers and government is not clear.¹²² Many of her columns were related to family and household concerns and emphasised the significance of motherhood.¹²³ The marginalisation of women's interests within the BUF is demonstrated by the intermittent appearance of the women's page in *Action* and its the positioning at the rear of the paper.¹²⁴

The BUF often stated that married women would be allowed to work, if they wished to do so, and they would be paid on an equitable basis with men, but, as the corporate state would ensure higher wages for men, there would be no need for them to work.¹²⁵ Raven Thomson made clear that while it was not the intention of BUF policy to 'thrust women out of industry and the professions' that would, inevitably, be the result of the higher wages that would be provided by the corporate state.¹²⁶ It appears that the BUF's advocacy of equal pay for equal work was not driven by a sense of fairness, but by its desire to prevent employers hiring women because they could be paid less than men.

Unsurprisingly, the BUF also suggested women's natural role was the family and domestic matters.¹²⁷ *Blackshirt* asserted that fascism would appeal to women, especially mothers, who lived through their children and who would appreciate the saner, fairer world that fascism would provide:

There are questions such as health, housing, and education which are almost entirely women's province, yet up to now have always been decided by theoretical experts with a total lack of practical experience, instead of mothers whom they effect.¹²⁸

Fascist perceptions of the relationships within marriage are illustrated by a short story in *Action*, in which the League of Nations is mocked. One of its main characters is a young wife who disobeys her husband and misguidedly sets off to a foreign country as part of a group of pacifists hoping to prevent a war. Her husband follows and rescues her, also saving her from the spanking meted out to the other pacifists by the natives of the country. The wife, while appearing grateful, manages to transfer the blame to her husband for letting her leave England.¹²⁹ The story feeds perceptions of women as childlike, wayward, manipulative and in need of a firm hand. In practice, the BUF preferred to keep women and men segregated. Women had their own, separate, martial arts and first aid classes and were only allowed in the Black House, as guests, on the third Wednesday of the month.¹³⁰ The first Blackshirt summer camp, held at Pagham in 1933, was open to all BUF members and families were encouraged to attend, but the 1934 camp was for male members only.¹³¹ Subsequently, separate camps were held for men and women, with the, shorter, women's camp being held at the end of the summer.

The concept of separate holiday camps for men and women might have appealed to Leese, who occasionally took his holidays apart from his wife.¹³² Unquestionably the IFL's attitude to women was more rigid than that of the BUF. IFL policy was emphatic that a woman's place was in the home:

Let our employers hire male labour wherever possible, and women will then be able to find their true employment once more. The true solution to female unemployment is in finding work for men so that they can afford to marry.¹³³

Apart from advocating the abolition of universal suffrage, the IFL had little else to say about women.

Back to the Land

The summer camps were a minor part of the BUF's attempt to encourage members to live the healthy life. All British fascist groups had expressed concerns regarding the fitness of the nation's men, and the IFL and, especially, the BUF related this to the evils of city life. The IFL advocated a policy of de-urbanisation as the first of four steps designed to improve the health of the nation. The second step, apparently inspired by Social Darwinism, was the reduction of humanitarianism, 'permitting the natural forces of nature to assert themselves.' The third was the introduction of strict laws to prevent inter-race marriage between Britons and Jews, and the final step required the sterilisation of those carrying hereditary diseases.¹³⁴

The BUF was not so clinical. Linehan has shown that members of the BUF had a nostalgic, romanticised view of rural life. They perceived it as offering a healthy way of life, balanced by the natural rhythms of the countryside, and preserving the essence of British character and culture. The BUF's reverence for nature was most tellingly expressed by Henry Williamson.¹³⁵ This nostalgic desire to preserve and restore a romanticised rural life was shared by Jorian Jenks, who wrote the countryside column in *Action*, and argued for the retention of small farms and their associated crafts.¹³⁶ Mosley claimed that those raised in the country were 'steady virile stock' essential to the nation's survival. While the BUF's perception of the city relied heavily on Spengler's pessimistic assessment, Linehan argues that they did not share his terminal prognosis.¹³⁷ Linehan's reasoning is supported by Chesterton's description of the BUF's plans to remodel the cities to provide a healthier environment.¹³⁸ Despite the romanticised visions articulated by back-to-the-land advocates, such as Williamson, BUF policy relied

on science and technology to revitalise the country and revive its economic fortunes.¹³⁹ This contradiction is compatible with the concept of ‘reactionary modernism’ developed by Jeffrey Herf to explain the dichotomy between the anti-modernist, irrationalist and romantic nature of Nazi ideology and the rational and pragmatic use of modern technology in practice.¹⁴⁰

The BUF’s interest in the concepts of the back-to-the-land movement and the recognition of common concerns led to discussions on co-operation and a possible merger with the English Mistery and later the English Array. Despite their mutual neuroses, there were such fundamental differences in their plans for government that alliance was impossible, though there was no objection to instances of co-operation at a local level. The most notable areas of difference were the BUF’s intention to create a dictatorship rather than strengthen the role of the monarchy and the aristocracy, and the BUF’s plans to centralise authority. The BUF’s tendency to pander to women was also a point of contention.¹⁴¹

Fascist culture

British fascists were convinced that Britain’s cultural life was as much in need of a thorough overhaul as its political and economic institutions and they offered a positive, albeit somewhat vague and often conflicting, approach to rejuvenating the cultural life of the nation. Cornforth was confident that a fascist state would ‘create a culture that will be a living flame in the heart of every man and woman of our race.’ The essential spirit of this revived culture was to be ‘A manful appreciation of Life.’¹⁴² Similarly, Cutmore believed it was still possible for great art to be produced, ‘works of such a power and magnificence, of such overwhelming sincerity that they will irresistibly draw the people towards

them.’¹⁴³ Lang proposed that the arts should be at the heart of the fascist administration, binding ‘government to our national cultural expression.’ The fascist state would support men whose work was ‘soundly based upon great national pride; men to whom art is something vital, something real, something worthy of a nation’s effort.’¹⁴⁴

Fascists envisioned a film industry in Britain that would be free from Jewish influence from production to exhibition. British films would dominate the cinema screens and Hollywood would no longer be allowed to corrupt the nation or undermine its traditions and institutions. Henry Gibbs urged that British films should reflect the true vitality of British life. Documentaries, or dramas based on the lives and work of the people of Britain were what was required.¹⁴⁵ Linehan notes that the films that Gibbs admired fitted well with fascist preoccupations with back-to-the-land images of hardy folk, close to nature, and uncorrupted by modernity.¹⁴⁶ Films that uplifted the spirit and enriched the life of the nation, especially those that had heroic and patriotic themes, were also to be encouraged.¹⁴⁷ Nazi Germany was pointed to as a model for a revived British film industry. That German and Italian cinema continued to show the escapist and inconsequential films that the audiences favoured, and overt propaganda films represented only a small proportion of those shown, received less attention.¹⁴⁸ It is unlikely that British fascists would have been able to alter the nation’s cinematic tastes with any more success than their continental counterparts.

British fascists deplored the appearance of foreign performers on the British stage and urged more state control.¹⁴⁹ While the mechanics of the proposals for bringing about the nation’s cultural rebirth remained vague, the

intention was clear: the state would regulate all aspects of the nation's cultural life.

THE MAINSTREAM PRESS: CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

The state of the nation

The mainstream press did not fully share the fascists' perception of national decline. There was no sense of crisis, just an awareness that the times were changing and not always for the better. Alison Light has suggested that some inter-war novels evoke a romantic Toryism that conjures up a past that is nobler, more exciting and less hemmed-in than life between the wars.¹⁵⁰ Some articles in the quality press also, particularly the Tory papers, created that sense of celebration of, and yearning for, a more glorious time. There was no expression of anguish or any deep-seated disillusionment with the status quo. Throughout the inter-war period the leader columns of the *Times* and the *Telegraph* continued to support the Government on most issues and the overall tone of the papers was one of maintaining the existing state of affairs, while encouraging considered and moderate improvement.¹⁵¹ There is no evidence to suggest that the Tory quality press or its readers thought the post-war generation was endangering the nation by mindlessly pursuing pleasure. The papers remained committed to liberalism.

The editorials of the popular press were more frenetic and frequently conveyed the impression that the Government's actions, or its lack of action, were either driving the nation into decline, or failing to arrest the waning of Britain's power and prestige.¹⁵² Other sections of these papers also expressed criticism of the Government.¹⁵³ Nonetheless, there were also articles that contradicted the

claims of gloom and decline. J. D. Strange, returning to England after several years abroad, challenged 'this talk of the old country going to the dogs.'¹⁵⁴

Rather than criticising the pursuit of pleasure, the popular press encouraged it. Its attention was not as strictly focussed on national and international issues as the quality press. There was a noticeable concentration on the domestic.¹⁵⁵ Lifestyle articles tended to be aspirational.¹⁵⁶ In keeping with the growth in disposable household income and the rising number of women with their own income, consumerism was celebrated.¹⁵⁷ Features and regular gossip columns kept readers up-to-date with the doings of the great, the good and the downright notorious.¹⁵⁸ Advice and lifestyle columns were popular, offering encouragement to those ill-at-ease in a changing, more flexible, society where gender roles and social class were less clearly and rigidly defined. The popular papers occasionally flirted with anti-liberal ideas, in their admiration for the accomplishments of Hitler and Mussolini or, in discussing the advantages of dictatorship or the failings of parliamentary democracy, but they always returned to the liberal fold.

Mainstream society and class distinction

Unlike the fascist press, the quality papers reflected and reinforced the existing class hierarchy. Regular court and society columns reported the activities of the aristocracy. The names of those who were to be received by the King or Queen at Buckingham Palace that day were published in the daily 'Court Circular' columns of the *Times* and the *Telegraph*. Still, there was an acknowledgement that for a number of readers some accommodation had to be made in the attempt to retain the material standards and values of the previous generation. An article in the

Times, accepted that space in the family home was ‘generally becoming more and more limited.’ Lack of space in ‘small households’, such as the three storey Georgian house described in the article, made planning a nursery difficult.¹⁵⁹ The *Times* also ran a series of recipes for small households.¹⁶⁰ The readers of the quality press were assumed to know how to behave in polite society and there was, consequently, a dearth of articles giving advice on etiquette.

The popular press was less hidebound by the class system, as befitted their more aspirational content. Celebrities featured heavily, although the *Mail* retained its court column and the paper featured the aristocracy in the gossip columns.¹⁶¹ The gossip columns in the *Mirror* also kept readers up-to-date with the engagements, marriages, and changes of hairstyle of the aristocracy and well-to-do. The *Mirror*’s tone was perhaps a little less respectful than other papers.¹⁶² Although in the early to mid 1930s there was a preponderance of aristocratic gossip, celebrities and politicians also graced the *Mirror*’s gossip columns.¹⁶³ The ‘Talk of London’ column, written by ‘The Dragoman’ in the *Express*, contained a mix of society, celebrity and sporting gossip.¹⁶⁴ ‘The Dragoman’ also had a tendency to mock the eccentricities and less honourable aspects of the aristocracy.¹⁶⁵ As the decade progressed, however, celebrities generated much more coverage in the popular press than did the aristocracy. Throughout the period the activities of the film industry were of particular interest.¹⁶⁶

The popular press promoted the notion of a more socially mobile society with a less rigid class structure. But, despite some support for a more fluid class system the popular press did not overtly share the fascists’ professed desire for a classless society. On one occasion, however, the *Express* came close to fascist, or possibly socialist, views on class. Over the 1930s the paper’s attitude to ‘high

society' became more dismissive.¹⁶⁷ In 1938 after announcing that the *Express* did not print social gossip, the paper went on to claim that readers were not interested in the activities and clothes of the members of 'Society' before turning what had been a criticism of gossip into a critique of the class system arguing that it created two nations with nothing in common and that, for the good of the nation and their own benefit, the rich and the proud should be dissuaded from the view that 'their sole business was the (more or less) stately consumption of goods created by other people's labour.'¹⁶⁸ Despite this, the social and fashion activities of the royal family remained newsworthy, as a front-page headline declaring 'The Queen wears a new crinoline gown' demonstrates.¹⁶⁹

The *Mail* never wavered in its interest in the aristocracy and in March 1938 lauded the start of the London Season and its new crop of debutantes.¹⁷⁰ The paper did, however, reject the social observation of class boundaries, Anne Temple recommended that a reader who had 'risen in the social world' should not try and hide her origins but instead take pride in them.¹⁷¹ For those readers who were not at ease in their social setting, the *Mail* offered advice on etiquette and how to avoid the embarrassment of a social *faux pas*.¹⁷² For the popular press, class became less significant as the 1930s progressed, and they engaged with, and encouraged, a more dynamic and varied social structure.

Mainstream perceptions of masculinity

Mainstream perceptions of masculinity were more diverse and complex than those of British fascists. Generally the quality press did not adopt a didactic approach in their presentation of the masculine ethos. The tenor of editorials, news reports and articles reflected the culture of the public school, and was reminiscent of

‘muscular Christianity’, an expression of maleness inspired by constructions of nineteenth century imperial masculinity. Sonya Rose described this as ‘tempered British masculinity’, a combination of strength, endurance, restraint and chivalry.¹⁷³ This perception of masculinity crossed class-boundaries, but it was not the only pattern for male behaviour available in the mainstream press.

While male skills and strength were unashamedly celebrated, and the extensive coverage of men’s sporting activities demonstrated the significance of sport in defining manliness, the popular press offered a variety of images of masculinity.¹⁷⁴ Men about town such as ‘the Dragoman’, Charles Graves and Tom Driberg, who as well as writing the William Hickey column in the *Express* also provided articles under his own name, were prominently featured.¹⁷⁵ ‘Character’ was perceived as important to success for a man; courage, hard work and self-belief would enable a man to overcome life’s handicaps.¹⁷⁶ Advertisements presented handsome, healthy young men; some epitomised fresh faced boyish charm, others the strong willed type with jutting jaw.¹⁷⁷ There was also the slightly older and more sophisticated man about town, or, contrastingly, the rugged outdoor type.¹⁷⁸ Experts, or authority figures, such as doctors were portrayed, in advertisements as distinguished, older men often wearing glasses.¹⁷⁹

Cartoon strips provided other images: timid men dominated by their wives, mature office managers locked into a war of attrition with the office boy, men who were not as smart as they thought they were and were manipulated by their wives, and the lantern-jawed heroes of the adventure strips.¹⁸⁰ ‘The Pater’ comic strip in the *Mirror* featured a short, fat balding man well into middle age, whose tall, elegant wife regularly physically abused him.¹⁸¹ The ‘Little Wife’ cartoon in the *Mail* appeared to be in a similar vein, but there was genuine

affection shown between Eve and her husband; her manipulation of him was gentle and without malice. More significantly, there was no violence or public affront to his dignity.¹⁸² The *Mirror*'s 'Useless Eustace' cartoons also starred a short, fat, balding man who was always in trouble or misunderstanding his situation.¹⁸³ These cartoons illustrated a perception that middle class men had less control in their homes and work environments than their fathers and grandfathers.

Although there was a growing trend for fathers to be more involved with their children's lives, the tradition of emotional distance continued to be prevalent amongst those men exposed to the public school ethos. Indeed, it was thought newsworthy that an Eton housemaster was in the habit of publicly embracing his sons after they had achieved some athletic success.¹⁸⁴

In February 1933 the *Mail* and the *Express* both published articles on modern fatherhood. The *Mail* article was written by Miles Malleson, an actor, dramatist, and father of two sons by his second wife, Joan, a doctor who specialised in contraception and advocated the legalisation of abortion. Malleson claimed that modern fathers took a much greater interest in their children and adopted a more involved approach to their upbringing, taking their 'full share of looking after the child from its earliest days.' Though 'full share' was perhaps an exaggeration, as Malleson was quick to qualify the statement: 'Not perhaps, in food and clothes and baby ailments, but in his play hours, his questionings, and his first lessons.'¹⁸⁵ So, he avoided the boring and unpleasant parts but took a full share in the fun and interesting aspects of the child's life.

The *Express* article, by an anonymous 'nursery specialist', recommended that helping with the child would strengthen the bond between them, and the

father would gain affection and respect.¹⁸⁶ Fathers were encouraged to have an active involvement in the care of their children, and to do this intelligently they needed to 'learn how to fulfil their share of responsibility for the health and happiness of their children.'¹⁸⁷ An increased and active interest in the care of their children was part of the 'domestication' of men, which also included an involvement in housework, home improvement, shopping and shared leisure activities.¹⁸⁸ There is nothing in the fascist press that reflected mainstream recognition of, and moderate support for, men's greater involvement in domestic activities.

This image of the domesticated male is very different from that portrayed in the fiction printed in the popular press. In the *Express*, Sapper's Bulldog Drummond is presented as a heroic Englishman, but he is antisemitic, violent, and acts illegally to catch and punish criminals.¹⁸⁹ In Sapper's stories brutality is relished and there is more than a hint of sadism; foreign equates with evil, and his enemies include the Bolshevik, the 'dago', and especially the Jew.¹⁹⁰ Physically he is represented as strong, clean-cut, and firm-jawed. A man of action for whom the end outweighs the means. He is a figure who would not look out of place in the pages of the fascist press, yet he and his friends are presented as role models for British youth.

Mainstream concern for youth

Gottlieb has suggested that there was a lively debate in the British press regarding the nation's youth, related to the ongoing crisis of masculinity that the BUF were articulating.¹⁹¹ Yet the sources she uses are not from the national daily newspapers and there is no evidence of the debate in either the popular or quality

press at this time. Even the sources relating to Rothermere's promotion of youth and the Blackshirts are from publications with limited circulation. The first, an article written by the dramatist Hugh Ross Williamson, who at the time was in his early thirties, was part of a series published in the weekly magazine *Everyman* reflecting 'the modern point of view.' There was no reference to perceptions of masculinity. Williamson concentrated on describing how 'youth' viewed politics. According to Williamson the only viable choice was between fascism and communism. His choice was clearly for fascism.¹⁹² The second source, Malcolm MacDonald's reasoned response to Lord Rothermere, also provides a fitting rebuttal to Williamson's arguments. MacDonald was careful not to dismiss the aims and potential of the Blackshirt movement out of hand, while convincingly casting doubt on Rothermere's arguments. His most significant point was that any benefits to be gained from living in a fascist Britain were uncertain, and the price, intolerance and political repression, was too high.¹⁹³

During the mid 1920s there had been some concern in the Tory popular press about effeminacy and idleness in young men, though Bingham suggests that this was largely an expression of opposition to the 'dole'.¹⁹⁴ Additionally, the mainstream press did report, over a number of years, meetings of the National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS) that showed some teachers were concerned that boys were being taught by women. They also argued that the heads of mixed schools should always be men as most men 'would not accept service under women.'¹⁹⁵ However, this issue was not of major public interest and was not generally discussed in the leader columns.¹⁹⁶ Joanna Bourke has suggested that the issue was being stirred up by a group of ex-army teachers and PT instructors who resented what they regarded as female intrusion into their area of

expertise.¹⁹⁷ The National Union of Teachers did not share the Schoolmasters' concerns, and advocated 'that appointments should be made regardless of sex.'¹⁹⁸

There were also occasional articles that raised concerns that women were gaining ascendancy over men. R. D. Blumenfeld, editor of the *Express*, observed that:

I have been watching a strange metamorphosis for some time, and I am coming more and more to the belief that if the young men do not soon take a good pull at themselves they will be left behind by very type of woman whose only qualification thirty or forty years ago was to play "The Maidens Prayer" on the piano or recite "The Charge of the Light Brigade" in the drawing room.¹⁹⁹

Interestingly, he did not suggest that women should return to the position of thirty years ago, instead he urged young men to work harder and recommended that parents ensured that their sons were taught a trade or profession. The view that gender had less impact on ability than had previously been thought was also supported by the educationalist Sir Henry Hadow.²⁰⁰

Other echoes of fascist sentiment appeared in the popular press, even when discussing children. The literary editor of the *Express*, Reginald Pound, having described his young sons' enjoyment of the historical adventures of Drake, Nelson, and Clive, adopted the terminology of the fascists when he mentioned 'falsetto-voiced friends' who 'deplore the kindling in young minds of the imperial spirit.' He also referred to 'emasculates' who challenged the attributes that had built the empire. Unlike the fascists, however, he admitted that the challenge had some validity, since there were 'dark stains on the pages of history.'²⁰¹

At first glance the aims of the British National Cadet Association, which included the mental, moral and physical training of boys to form their character and develop principles of patriotism and good citizenship, and to fit them to assist in the defence of home and country in the event of a national emergency, seem

reminiscent of fascist youth policy. However, Lieutenant General Sir Hugh Jeudwine, Chairman of the British National Cadet Association and a former Director General of the Territorial Army, saw no conflict between liberal individualism and patriotism. While discussing service, patriotism, comradeship, will and power, all words that resonate with the fascist mindset, he highlighted a significant difference.

Through ... team spirit and comradeship a youth can be led to practise good citizenship, to answer the call to service, not as in totalitarian states by repression of individuality, but by the expression of that individuality towards a common end. For the young must think for themselves and not accept as incontrovertible opinions put forward by the generation that is passing away or follow blindly the paths they have signposted.²⁰²

The education and training of youth were significant issues but, apart from Rothermere's polemics during his support of the Blackshirts, the mainstream press did not promote youth as the remedy for the nation's ills in the way the fascist press did.

The role of women

If youth was the solution, according to the fascist press, then women were a notable part of the problem; again this was not a view that was fully shared by the mainstream press. Women did not make much of an impression in the quality press. The *Times* was the only national daily newspaper not to have a regular women's page. There were articles about fashion and columns relating to the home and garden, particularly in the *Telegraph*, but there was little comment on women's role in either the nation or the home. A notable exception was a short but sincere plea for better pay and conditions for nurses by the medical correspondent of the *Times*.²⁰³ The overriding impression of women's role given

by the *Daily Telegraph* was that of the traditional homemaker keeping a careful eye on the household budget.

The careers advice offered to the mature female readers of the *Telegraph* was entirely related to the home. Positions as décor consultants, receptionists in estate agencies or large blocks of flats, or emergency housekeepers were considered suitable for lady readers whose circumstances required them to find employment.²⁰⁴ It appears that the women who read the *Telegraph* were assumed to be confident in their roles as household managers and mothers, needing no advice on the latter and requiring little more than suggestions for putting a modern gloss on traditional methods for the former. Lack of coverage indicates that the state of one's marriage was a purely private affair and not an appropriate subject for the nation's breakfast table.

Similarly, the *Times*, apart from the occasional appearance of the 'Mrs Miniver' column between 1937 and 1939, did not concern itself with the role of women in the family or the wider world. According to Alison Light 'Mrs Miniver' represented conservatism in its broadest sense. The column emphasised the quiet, private, life and celebrated the known and familiar.²⁰⁵ The Minivers' fictional marriage appeared companionate, they were equal partners but there was a degree of separation that suggested a modern version of the concept of separate spheres. Mrs Miniver was content, socially adept and enjoyed home and motherhood without being 'lost' in her children.²⁰⁶ She was the fictional representation of a woman both self-contained and self-centred, sure of the rightness of her upper middle-class values and her perception of the world.²⁰⁷ Although the Tory quality press regarded women as homemakers, this was in a purely private sense, and was not regarded as serving the state.

In the popular press women were much more prominent, more vibrant. Bingham argues that the popular press were motivated by the need to attract female readers in order to increase circulation and to generate revenue from advertising.²⁰⁸ There were numerous articles on what was expected of the modern women in a variety of circumstances.²⁰⁹ The papers reported, and the leader columns discussed, issues relating to women, for example, equal pay or the loss of British nationality when marrying a foreigner.²¹⁰ Comment was usually supportive, if somewhat patronising. The popular press provided a platform for women to raise the issues that concerned them, and Ellen Wilkinson MP wrote several articles for the *Express*.²¹¹ Striking a less than sisterly note, Elsie Ganner, also writing in the *Express*, insisted that women made bad employers, being suspicious of, and unsympathetic to, their female workers.²¹²

The popular press adopted a more positive view of working women than that of the fascists, and encouraged women in the workforce in a variety of roles.²¹³ The *Mail* reported they were soon likely to be gaining employment in flying schools, as ten women in Middlesex had recently passed the tests necessary for a pilot's licence.²¹⁴ The paper also noted that despite their wages being generally fifty to sixty-one percent lower than men's, women were more productive than men if work required dexterity or alertness.²¹⁵ Ann Baxter, in an article in the *Express*, urging women to fight wage cuts, also argued for women to be paid a wage they could live on without having to rely on their parents or husbands. She made the valid point that the war had 'made many women the mainstay of their families.'²¹⁶

There was a definite sense in the popular press that the dynamics of marriage were changing and love and marriage were frequently discussed.²¹⁷

The *Express* often ran articles discussing modern attitudes to both, including a series that analysed readers' responses to a questionnaire on the reasons their marriages were happy or unhappy. Wives in happy marriages believed their husbands valued their appearance and their domestic skills, shared their views on children, discussed their worries, and allowed the wife to have her own opinions. Those in unhappy marriages blamed their husband not wanting children, the lack of shared friends, religious differences, the husband's critical attitude or his interest in other women.²¹⁸ The responses suggest that readers who believed their marriages were happy were in companionate marriages and indicate that in many successful marriages the husband looked to his wife and family for friendship and emotional support. They also show that there was some blurring of the boundary between traditional gender roles.

Despite supportive editorials and encouraging feature articles reflecting a more diverse view of what was possible for women, the fundamental understanding of a woman's role in life had not changed significantly. The *Mirror's* psychologist complained that women were becoming too masculine and were exploiting men financially. Contrarily, he also grumbled that since women were increasingly allowed to work outside the home they had become economically and emotionally independent.²¹⁹ Some female columnists expressed attitudes similar to those of fascist discourse. In 1939 Ann Temple was adamant that 'normal womanhood' revolved around the bearing and rearing of children. Women who did not want children were accused of fear and selfishness.²²⁰ Patience Strong offered a nauseating picture of a little girl's future:

She is like a doll - all pink and sweet - She looks quite sweet enough to eat - With creamy skin and eyes of blue, and lips like roses in the dew ... Oh, may she have a happy life, and live to be a perfect wife - to bake sweet cakes and bread and pies - And make some good man

strong and wise ... And may she never wish to roam - far from her happy little home ... May she be kind and good and sweet - and make somebody's life- complete.²²¹

A similar tritely sentimental rhyme for a baby boy ended with a very different sentiment:

Each child creates his destiny – who knows what it may bring - Oh, may those tiny hands be used to do some splendid thing.²²²

The advertisements in the popular press also relied heavily on the stereotype of the little woman whose life revolved around the home.²²³

The view that family life was central to women's existence was shared to some degree by the mainstream and fascist press, yet, despite the continued use of stereotypical images, the popular press also presented positive images of women outside the domestic sphere that many fascists would find objectionable.

The nation's health

The health of the nation, particularly its men, was an issue, which, while it did not feature heavily in the mainstream press, did recur occasionally throughout the inter-war period. Unlike the fascist press, however, the mainstream press did not restrict its interest in health to military style fitness and the maintenance of racial pre-eminence. It covered the whole range of health issues, from personal to public health, and offered advice on safety in the home, basic first aid, how to avoid influenza, and keeping fit. Issues such as the developing national health provision, mental health, the effects of unemployment on health, and environmental and industrial health were debated.²²⁴

Until 1937 government policy on physical fitness had been restricted to the physical education of children, but in 1937, following a poor showing at the 1936 Olympics, the National Government launched the 'National Fitness

Campaign' aimed at improving the physical health and vigour of adults. That there was no element of compulsion was strongly emphasised throughout the campaign. Lord Baden-Powell thought it admirable that young men and women were 'voluntarily taking up physical culture without being forced to do so, as is the case in some countries.'²²⁵

A *Times* article in 1938 supporting the National Fitness Campaign, pointed out that fitness classes had to compete with spectator sports which were usually more accessible.²²⁶ Nevertheless, significant numbers were taking up the opportunity to join the classes. During the 1930s there had been a growing interest in fitness, the League of Health and Strength had 100,000 members in 1931 and by 1939 membership had increased to 162,987.²²⁷ The Women's League of Health and Beauty had 130,000 members in 1937. Keep-fit classes were also offered to 300,000 members of the National Council of Girls' Clubs, though not all of them took advantage of the opportunity.²²⁸ Zweiniger-Bargielowska notes that despite similarities between the BUF's approach to physical fitness and that of the League of Health and Strength, fascist attempts to annex the fitness movement failed and members rejected fascist politics, finding an outlet for their patriotism within the political mainstream.²²⁹ The fascist view of health was focussed on physical fitness, the mainstream press reflected the health concerns of the general public.

Rural bliss

Both fascist and mainstream papers promoted the view that those who lived in the country were healthier than city dwellers. Both the quality and popular press regularly featured short nostalgic and sentimental items that promoted an

appreciation of rural life and reinforced the impression that the countryside was a healthier place to live than the city. They did not, however, advocate a back-to-the-land policy. While encouraging agricultural expansion, the *Mirror* clearly felt that those arguing for such a policy had little chance of success and likened them to 'a voice crying in the wilderness.'²³⁰

The images of rural life presented in the popular press were highly sentimental. The 'Countryman's Diary' column in the *Mail* presented an idealised vision of rural bliss. Each season was shown to offer its own form of enchantment.²³¹ Even the less pleasant aspects of life in the country were given a positive twist.²³² In the *Express* Andrew Souter wrote nostalgically about idyllic landscapes and the traditional method of ploughing.²³³ Bruce Blunt's column, 'A Breath of Country Air' provided a less idealised look at village life, although on one occasion he became a little sentimental over baby rabbits.²³⁴ The *Mail*'s 'Down on Pat Murphy's Farm' was another example of the wholesome decency of country folk.²³⁵ The similarity between the fascists' perceptions of rural life and those of the popular press are highlighted by Henry Williamson, who wrote similar articles for the BUF press and the *Express*.²³⁶ Williamson had recently taken up farming and regaled readers with stories promoting the 'joy of a real job of work.'²³⁷

However, there was no concerted campaign in the mainstream press to promote the back-to-the-land movement. While the slogan 'back to the land' was bandied about throughout the inter-war period there are few press reports of any positive developments. A demonstration in York in 1930 highlighted the difficulty the movement faced. Captain E. T. Morris, President of the National Farmers Union, speaking about cereal production encapsulated the problem for

farming as a whole. Agriculture needed to be reformed and put 'on a paying basis' before the countryside could be repopulated. Without reform, which would require considerable government intervention, 'the "back to the land" movement would remain a piece of lip service.'²³⁸

Proponents of what Dan Stone calls organo-fascism, such as Viscount Lymington, Rolf Gardiner, Arthur Bryant, and H. J. Massingham, rarely appeared in the mainstream press in connection with the back-to-the-land movement.²³⁹ Bryant probably had the highest profile, he was well known for producing historical pageants, and appeared regularly on the radio.²⁴⁰ He had also written several historical works.²⁴¹ H. J. Massingham wrote extensively about the countryside and published a memoir of Edward John Trelawney.²⁴² Lymington was also a minor public figure. As MP for Basingstoke until his resignation in 1934 his name was occasionally mentioned in reports of parliamentary proceedings. There were also brief reports of his divorce and remarriage, and of his sale of some of Isaac Newton's papers.²⁴³ Gardiner was occasionally mentioned in the mainstream press in connection with folk dancing or Anglo-German relations.²⁴⁴

In 1941 the four formed the Kinship in Husbandry; the group had a core membership of twelve and was conceived by Gardiner as promoting organic farming and opposing practices that put profit before good husbandry or reduced the number of people working on the land. Its ultimate aim was the repopulation of the countryside in a feudal type system that encouraged local self-sufficiency. Lymington had been a member of the anti-democratic, nationalist organisation English Mistry until 1937 when, following criticism of his behaviour in the aftermath of his divorce, he left to form the English Array. Gardiner did not join

the Array, but was connected to it. On one occasion, at least, he spoke at a meeting and he contributed to the Array's quarterly paper.²⁴⁵ The activities of these groups did not noticeably encroach on the consciousness of the mainstream.

The arts and popular culture

Another issue that generated less heat in the mainstream papers than in the fascist press was the arts. There was some debate in the mainstream press regarding art and culture, but nothing couched in terms comparable with that in the fascist press. The quality papers reinforced the elite perception of art as something that needed to be understood to be appreciated, and that understanding was predicated on education. It was in this light that books, plays, the ballet, opera, art, classical concerts and recordings were reviewed.²⁴⁶ Summing up the state of modern art the music critic, Richard Capell refers to 'its malaise, its desperate ingenuity, its infection from machinery, posters, sport and cheap luxury, in fact, its modernity.'²⁴⁷ The mainstream appears more conscious of the complexity and variety of the time, able to appreciate the good and to disregard the mediocre or worse.

The mainstream press did not share the fascist suspicion of all things Bloomsbury. The *Times* ran articles that praised Virginia Woolf for her literary criticism and defended Bloomsbury intellectuals against charges of 'detestable snobbery.'²⁴⁸ Bloomsbury was also described as 'the last refuge of the Non-Conformist conscience in England' and an 'urban foreign quarter' without any indication that this was undesirable.²⁴⁹

Epstein was a controversial figure in the world of art, and his sculptures had roused the fury of the popular press.²⁵⁰ Yet, during the 1930s the mainstream

press in Britain generally presented him in a sympathetic light. The *Express* treated him as a celebrity, reporting on work in progress and highlighting the protective nature of his shrewd and devoted Scottish wife.²⁵¹ Both quality and popular papers gave favourable reviews of Epstein's sculptures and paintings, though there was also some criticism.²⁵² The only fierce critics were those whose religious sensibilities had been offended by a particular work, for example *Behold the Man*, a study of Christ, generated many complaints and the *Mirror* refused to use a photograph of the work.²⁵³ These complaints were milder than those in the fascist press and did not condemn Epstein's work in its entirety.

Unlike the fascist press, the mainstream welcomed the arrival of foreign performers and encouraged the employment of ethnic minorities. The *Express*' theatrical correspondent urged 'Dramatists! Don't Forget Our Negro Actors.' This was a headline that would have appalled fascists. The article praised the work of Paul Robeson and mourned the lack of 'suitable plays for a Negro actor.' There was also admiration for Nina Mae Mackinney, 'the beautiful coloured actress' and variety star who was said to have 'Knocked the town for a loop' and single-handedly revived the tradition of the stage-door-Johnny.²⁵⁴

Both quality and popular press reviewed radio programmes, theatre, and films. Reviewers welcomed the release of British films, but were also keen to recommend Hollywood films to their readers as well. They did not share fascist fears that the American movies would debauch or degrade their readers, and, significantly, audiences were credited with the capacity to exercise critical judgement and to boycott films that lacked quality and offered superficiality and titillation. The *Express* reported, in 1932, that cinemagoers were turning their backs on films with a sex theme.²⁵⁵ Similarly, W. A. Mutch, in the *Mail*,

maintained that the British filmgoer was generally well informed and would not put up with shoddy work, although his judgement on American 'films of gangster life' was only slightly milder than that of the fascist press.²⁵⁶

Although there was mainstream concern at the dominance of Hollywood it was expressed in business terms or as the protection of a national asset and not as a reaction to a perceived conspiracy.²⁵⁷ Overall it is clear that American films were regarded as enjoyable and acceptable entertainment, and the popular press devoted considerable space to discussing both the films and the exploits of those associated with them.

CONCLUSION

The mainstream press reflected the complexities of post-war life. There were issues that concerned and, in the case of the popular press, even alarmed them. Developments in British culture were not among those issues. The quality press continued to maintain the status quo, reinforcing the class hierarchy and traditional gender roles. To a large extent the popular press did the same, but the *Express*, *Mail*, and *Mirror* were willing to explore new possibilities, to investigate the changing dynamics of family life, and encourage women in the workforce. This openness to wider experiences was part of the circulation battle and an attempt to attract as many readers as possible. Echoes of fascist cultural values were occasionally present in all of the papers examined; some representations of masculinity, the role of women, the education of boys, concern for fitness, and a sentimental attachment to rural life. However, for the mainstream press these were either a minority concern, or one aspect of a more diverse coverage. Heated

debates over issues such as the future of British youth remained the preserve of those with a political axe to grind.

Although cultural developments during the inter-war years did not meet with universal approval, and modernism, in particular, was viewed with suspicion, fascist demands for the sweeping away of perceived expressions of decadence and degeneracy did not find resonance with the general public. There were signs that public taste was changing and that what had once been merely tolerated had become accepted, if not embraced.²⁵⁸ It seems that the British attitude to modernity lacked the element of destructive energy that Frank Trommler has identified in Germany and from which the Nazis were able to draw strength and popular support.²⁵⁹ The obsession of British fascists with decadence and decline left them largely isolated from the mainstream, and their drive to destroy what they perceived as damaging to the nation in order to revive and renew national life did not resonate with the majority of the readers of the mainstream press. More representative is 'The Dragoman' who, discussing the education of a hypothetical daughter, commented that: 'There is no book that I should forbid her to read.'²⁶⁰ The mainstream press placed a higher value on individuality and on voluntary action than the fascist press. It also regarded civil organisations as playing a valuable role, without the need for state intervention. The fascists' need to control every aspect of domestic and national life was an alien concept. As the BUF, in particular, tried to implement its cultural values in guiding the manner in which its members lived, it created an ethos increasingly divorced from mainstream society.

¹ J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry Into its Origins and Growth* (Cosimo, New York, 2008), p.6. Originally published in 1932.

-
- ² Oliver Bennett, *Cultural Pessimism: Narratives of Decline in the Postmodern World* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2001), p. 1 & 3.
- ³ Steven Seidman, 'Modernity, Meaning, and Cultural Pessimism in Max Weber' in Peter Hamilton (ed.), *Max Weber: Critical Assessments, vol. 1* (Routledge, London, 1991), p. 159. See also Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (Penguin, London, 2003), pp.118-23.
- ⁴ Bennett, p. 2.
- ⁵ Dan Stone, 'The Far Right and the Back-to-the-Land Movement' in Julie V Gottlieb & Thomas P. Linehan, *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2002), p.184.
- ⁶ Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918-39* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000), p. 201.
- ⁷ Linehan, pp. 201-3.
- ⁸ Tony Collins 'Return To Manhood: The Cult of Masculinity and the British Union of Fascists' in J. A. Mangan, *Superman Supreme: Fascist Body as Political Icon – Global Fascism* (Frank Cass, London, 2000), p.159; Martin Durham, 'The Home and the Homeland: Gender and the British Extreme Right', *Contemporary British History* vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 67-80; 'Gender and the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Jul 1992), pp 513-529; Julie Gottlieb & Thomas Linehan (eds); Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp.201-287; Michael A. Spurr "'Playing for Fascism": Sportsmanship, Anti-Semitism and the British Union of Fascists', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 37, no. 4 (2003), pp. 360-376.
- ⁹ *Fascist Bulletin*, 25 Jul 1925, p. 1.
- ¹⁰ *Fascist Bulletin*, 20 Jun 1925, p.1.
- ¹¹ *Fascist Bulletin*, 26 Sep 1925, p. 1.
- ¹² *Fascist*, Feb 1933, p. 4; Jun 1937, p. 4; May 1934, p. 2; Jul 1934, p. 3; Apr 1935, p. 3; Mar 1936, p. 2; Apr 1936, p. 7; & Jun 1938, pp. 4-5.
- ¹³ Oswald Spengler *The Decline of the West* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000).
- ¹⁴ Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 94-5; 214-5; 7 256.
- ¹⁵ *Blackshirt*, Feb 1933, p. 2. E. G. Mandeville Roe, whose loyalty to fascism is now thought to be compromised by his undercover activity for MI5 and the

British Board of Deputies, wrote this short article. However, he would have been familiar with BUF thinking on this issue and was able to produce articles in line with the paper's policy. See Stephen Dorril, *Blackshirt* (Viking, London, 2006), pp. 451 & 454.

¹⁶ Linehan *British Fascism*, p.169.

¹⁷ Alexander Raven was one of many who asked 'Where is that land "fit for heroes to live in" that they were promised in the water-logged trenches of Flanders?' *Blackshirt*, 11-17 Nov 1933, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Blackshirt*, Aug 1935, p.1. See also *Blackshirt*, 17 Aug 1934, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Blackshirt*, 17 August 1934, p. 4.

²⁰ Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male* (Reaktion Books, London, 1996), pp. 13-4.

²¹ *Action*, 21 Aug 1937, p. 2.

²² *Fascist Bulletin*, 19 Dec 1925, p. 1.

²³ *Fascist Bulletin*, 25 Jul 1925, p. 1.

²⁴ *Fascist*, Dec 1931, 1.

²⁵ *Action*, 9 July 1936, p.9 & 29 Oct 1938, p. 5. *Blackshirt*, 28 Nov 1936, p. 3.

²⁶ *Fascist*, Dec 1931, p. 1.

²⁷ *Action*, 9 Jul 1936, p. 9.

²⁸ *Blackshirt*, 8 Jun 1934, p. 6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Action*, 11 Jun 1936, p. 14.

³¹ Gottlieb, 'Britain's New Fascist Man' in Julie Gottlieb & Thomas Linehan (eds), p. 85

³² *Blackshirt*, 1 Jun 1933, pp. 2-3.

³³ *Action*, 2 Dec 1937, p. 18.

³⁴ *Blackshirt*, 23 Feb- 1 Mar 1934, p. 3. See also 4 Jan 1935, p. 6 .

³⁵ *Action*, 21 May 1936, p. 15.

³⁶ *Blackshirt*, 17 August 1934, p. 6. See also *Action*, 2 Dec 1937, p.1 8.

³⁷ *Fascist*, Feb 1937, p. 3

³⁸ *Fascist*, Oct 1934, p. 2.

³⁹ *Fascist Bulletin*, 13 Jun 1925, p. 1.

⁴⁰ *Fascist Bulletin*, 11 Jul 1925, p. 1.

-
- ⁴¹ Martin Durham, 'The Home and the Homeland', p. 67.
- ⁴² *Fascist*, May 1930, p. 2.
- ⁴³ *Fascist*, Dec 1931, p. 1.
- ⁴⁴ *Fascist*, Feb 1931, p. 2.
- ⁴⁵ *Fascist*, Feb 1932, p. 2.
- ⁴⁶ *Blackshirt*, 19 Aug 1933, p. 3. See also 23 Jan 1937.
- ⁴⁷ *Action*, 30 Jul 1936, p. 10.
- ⁴⁸ *Blackshirt*, 17 Aug 1934, p. 8; & 8 Feb 1935, p. 9. *Fascist Week*, 12-18 Jan 1934, p. 5. Anne Brock Griggs also condemned the exploitation of women for cheap labour. *Action*, 16 Apr 1936, p.11.
- ⁴⁹ *Fascist*, Feb-Mar 1930, p. 3; May 1930, p. 1; & Nov 1930, p. 4.
- ⁵⁰ Oswald Mosley, *Fascism: 100 Questions Asked and Answered* (BUF Publications, London, 1936), cited in Durham, 'The Home and the Homeland' p.70.
- ⁵¹ *Fascist*, Apr 1929, p. 3 & 31 Dec 1931, p. 1.
- ⁵² *Blackshirt*, 1 Feb 1935, p. 9. *Action* 6 Mar 1936, p. 8 & 17 Sep 1938, p. 4.
- ⁵³ *Blackshirt*, 8 Nov 1935, p. 6.
- ⁵⁴ *Action*, 13 Feb 1937, p. 6.
- ⁵⁵ *Blackshirt*, 16 May 1936, p. 5.
- ⁵⁶ Dan Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain 1933-39* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2003). p. 149.
- ⁵⁷ Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 206-8.
- ⁵⁸ *Blackshirt*, 3 Aug, 1934, p. 6. Tony Collins quotes Wilmot's article in support of his claim that the BUF 'was violently opposed not only to intellectuals, but to intellectual activity itself.' See Collins, p. 149. He does not mention the later rebuttals by Cornforth and Cutmore.
- ⁵⁹ *Blackshirt*, 17 Aug 1934, p. 9.
- ⁶⁰ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (University of Wisconsin Press, London, 1985), p. 14.
- ⁶¹ *Blackshirt*, 27 Jul 1934, p. 9.
- ⁶² *Blackshirt*, 17 Aug 1934, p. 9. Sir Frank Brangwyn was an official war artist during the First World War, and Charles Sargeant Jagger was a leading sculptor of war memorials. A critical article by G. A. Baker inspired one BUF member to

write a spirited defence of the post-war arts in Britain, *Blackshirt*, 4 Jan 1935, p.

11

⁶³ Clive Bell, in *Civilisation* (Chatto, London, 1928), expressed his concern at the trend for domination and warmongering among those unable to find satisfaction in love, friendship, or the creation or appreciation of beauty. He also hoped for a 'New Renaissance', to be launched by the Bloomsbury Group. Cited in Frank Gloversmith 'Defining Culture: J. C. Powys, Clive Bell, R. H. Tawney and T. S. Elliot' in Frank Gloversmith (ed.) *Class, Culture and Social Change* (Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980), pp. 21 & 39.

⁶⁴ *Blackshirt*, 8 Jan 1938, p.5.

⁶⁵ *Blackshirt* articles had expressed contempt, describing them as 'mental eunuchs', shuddering cissies', 'flabby hearted', and 'creatures who lisped.' *Blackshirt*, 22-28 Jul 1933, p. 2. Chesterton referred to 'sexual indeterminates from Oxford and Bloomsbury.' *Blackshirt*, 16 May 1936, p. 1.

⁶⁶ *Blackshirt*, 2 May 1936, p. 2.

⁶⁷ *British Lion*, Jun 1929, p. 12.

⁶⁸ *Fascist*, July 1931, p. 1 & April 1935, p. 1.

⁶⁹ *Blackshirt*, 30 Oct 1937, p. 1.

⁷⁰ *Action*, 28 Aug 1937, p.20.

⁷¹ *Fascist Bulletin*, 11 Jul 1925, p. 1.

⁷² *Fascist*, Nov 1932, p. 2.

⁷³ *Blackshirt*, 21 Nov 1936, p. 2. See also 7 Feb 1936, p. 2; 28 Feb 1936, p. 1; & 10 Oct 1936, p. 2

⁷⁴ *Blackshirt*, 4 Nov 1933, p. 1.

⁷⁵ *Blackshirt*, 17 Aug 1934, p. 6. *Action*, 18 Aug 1937, p. 12. The IFL was also incensed at what it described as 'dirty' American films. *Fascist*, Nov 1932, p. 2.

⁷⁶ *Blackshirt*, 2 Nov 1934, p. 10.

⁷⁷ Thomas P. Linehan, 'Reactionary Spectatorship: British Fascists and Cinema in Inter-war Britain' in Julie V. Gottlieb & Thomas P. Linehan *The Culture of Fascism*, (I. B. Tauris, London, 2004), pp. 28-30.

⁷⁸ *Action*, 14 Nov 1936, p. 11.

⁷⁹ Linehan, 'Reactionary Spectatorship', pp. 31-2. *Action*, 27 Mar 1937, p. 13; 15 May 1937, p. 17; 12 Jun 1937, p. 13; 24 Jul 1937, p. 10; & 13 Aug 1937, p. 13.

Blackshirt, 11 Jan 1935, p. 11; & 21 Nov 1936, p. 2. *Fascist Week*, 20-6 Apr 1934, p. 4.

⁸⁰ The *Fascist* accused the BBC of 'disseminating Jewish-Socialist propaganda.' *Fascist*, Feb 1933, p. 2.

⁸¹ *Action*, 21 Aug 1937, p. 4. *Blackshirt*, 27 Mar 1937, p. 4.

⁸² *Blackshirt*, 7 Aug 1937, p. 4.

⁸³ See Roger Griffin (ed.), *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (Arnold, London, 1998), p. 13.

⁸⁴ Roger Griffin, 'This Fortress Built Against Infection' in Gottlieb & Linehan (eds), pp. 55-6.

⁸⁵ Dan Stone, 'The English Mistery, the BUF, and the Dilemmas of British Fascism', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 75, no. 2 (June, 2003), p. 338.

⁸⁶ *Fascist*, Jan 1934, p. 2.

⁸⁷ *Fascist Bulletin*, 13 Jun 1925, p.1. See also letter 25 Jul 1925, p.4.

⁸⁸ *Fascist*, Mar 1929, p. 2 & Nov 1929, p. 4.

⁸⁹ *Blackshirt*, 12 Oct 1934, p. 8.

⁹⁰ *Blackshirt*, 17 Aug 1934, p. 2.

⁹¹ *Blackshirt*, 9 Nov, p. 8.

⁹² *Fascist*, Jun 1930, p. 3.

⁹³ *Blackshirt*, Feb 1933, p.2.

⁹⁴ *Blackshirt*, 1 May 1933. p.2.

⁹⁵ *Blackshirt*, 30 Sep-6 Oct 1933, p. 1.

⁹⁶ *Blackshirt*, 7 Feb 1934, p. 4; 7 Dec 1934, p. 4; & 1 Jun 1937, p. 2. *Action*, 31 Oct 1936, p. 4; 13 Nov 1937, p. 13; 12 Feb 1938, p. 7; 26 Feb 1938, p. 1; & 28 May 1938.

⁹⁷ *Blackshirt*, 27 Jul 1934, p. 9.

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ *Fascist*, May 1930, pp 1-2.

¹⁰⁰ *Blackshirt*, 27 Jul 1934, p. 9. For a full analysis of the black shirt's significance see Philip M. Coupland, 'The Black Shirt in Britain: The Meanings and Functions of Political Uniform' in Gottlieb & Linehan (eds), pp. 100-115.

¹⁰¹ *Fascist Week*, 24 Nov 1933, p. 5. *Blackshirt*, 27 Aug 1934, p. 8.

¹⁰² Coupland, 'The Black Shirt in Britain', p.109.

-
- ¹⁰³ Philip M. Coupland “‘Left-Wing Fascism’ in Theory and Practice: The Case of the British Union of Fascists’, *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2002), pp. 38-61. In this article Coupland argues persuasively that despite the claims regarding the classless nature of the BUF, class-consciousness flourished and was reinforced throughout the movement. See pp.49-53.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Blackshirt*, 10 Aug 1934, p. 8.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Blackshirt*, 17 Aug 1934, p. 2.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Blackshirt*, 22-28 Jul 1933, p. 2. Spanking seems to be a recurring theme in the BUF see also *Action*, 28 Feb 1936, p. 14.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Blackshirt*, 16 May 1933, p. 2.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Blackshirt*, 8 Jan 1938, p.5
- ¹⁰⁹ *Blackshirt*, 20 Jul 1934, p. 6; & 3 Jul 1937, p. 2.
- ¹¹⁰ *Blackshirt*, 4 Jan 1935, p. 6. *Action*, 21 May 1936, p. 15.
- ¹¹¹ *Blackshirt*, 20 Jul 1934, p. 6.
- ¹¹² J. A. Booker, *Blackshirts-on-Sea* (Brockinday Publications, London, 1999), pp. 27-8.
- ¹¹³ Spurr, “Playing for fascism”, pp. 360-376. Collins, p. 159.
- ¹¹⁴ *Blackshirt*, 1 Jun 1933, p. 3.
- ¹¹⁵ *Blackshirt*, 11 Sep 1937, p. 5; & 18 Sep 1937, p. 3.
- ¹¹⁶ *Action*, 21 Aug 1937, p. 7.
- ¹¹⁷ Julie V. Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism: Women in Britain’s Fascist Movement* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2003), pp. 266-8.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-8, 269, 289, 324-5, & 335-6.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 269.
- ¹²⁰ *Action*, 21 Feb 1936, p. 4.
- ¹²¹ *Action*, 6 Jan 1938, p. 14.
- ¹²² *Action*, 20 Jan 1938, p. 14.
- ¹²³ *Action*, 19 Mar 1936, p. 11; 26 Mar 1936, p. 4; 28 Jan 1938, p. 14; & 5 Feb 1938, p. 14.
- ¹²⁴ There was a women’s page from February to April 1936, then nothing further until January 1938. During 1938 there were twelve issues without a women’s page. The final women’s page appeared at the end of August 1939. *Action*, 21 Feb 1936, p. 11; 16 Apr 1936, p. 11; 6 Jan 1938, p. 14; & 16 Aug 1939, p. 16.

-
- ¹²⁵ *Blackshirt*, 27 Aug 1934, p. 8; & 8 Feb 1935, p. 9. *Action*, 30 Jul 1936, p. 10.
- ¹²⁶ *Action*, 30 July 1936, p. 10. See also *Blackshirt*, 19 Aug 1933, p. 3.
- ¹²⁷ *Fascist Week*, 8 Dec 1933, p. 1 & 2.
- ¹²⁸ *Blackshirt*, 1 May 1933, p. 2.
- ¹²⁹ *Action*, 28 Feb 1936, p. 14.
- ¹³⁰ Michael A. Spurr, “‘Living the Blackshirt Life’: Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940”, *Contemporary European History*, 12,3 (2003), p.315.
- ¹³¹ Booker, pp. 13 & 19. *Blackshirt*, 20 Jul 1934, p. 6.
- ¹³² Arnold Spenser Leese, *Out Of Step: Events in the Two Lives of an Anti-Jewish Camel-Doctor* (Arnold S. Leese, Guildford, 1947), p. 56.
- ¹³³ *Fascist*, Feb 1931, p. 2.
- ¹³⁴ *Fascist*, Nov 1937, p. 3.
- ¹³⁵ Linehan, *British Fascism*, p. 251.
- ¹³⁶ *Action*, 28 Aug, 1937, p. 4.
- ¹³⁷ Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp. 253-6.
- ¹³⁸ *Action*, 4 June 1936, p. 6.
- ¹³⁹ See for example ‘SCIENCE TO THE RESCUE’, *Blackshirt*, 8 Nov, 1935, p.6.
- ¹⁴⁰ Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984), pp. 1-17.
- ¹⁴¹ Stone, ‘The English Mistery’, pp.354.
- ¹⁴² *Blackshirt*, 17 Aug 1934, p. 9.
- ¹⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁴ *Blackshirt*, 27 Jul 1934, p. 9.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Action*, 17 Apr 1937, p. 13; 2 Dec 1937, p. 15; & 30 Dec 1937, p. 17. While waiting for a fascist state the IFL advocated tougher censorship, and until that was forthcoming advocated a cinema boycott. *Fascist*, Feb 1932, p. 2.
- ¹⁴⁶ Linehan, ‘Reactionary Spectatorship’, p. 39.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Blackshirt*, 1 Mar 1935, p. 3. *Action*, 9 Jan 1937, p. 13; & 6 Mar 1937, p.13.
- ¹⁴⁸ Linehan, ‘Reactionary Spectatorship’, pp. 43-4.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Action*, 1 May 1937, p. 11.
- ¹⁵⁰ Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars*, (Routledge, London, 1991), p. 157.

-
- ¹⁵¹ For example, there was support for the Government's agriculture and disarmament policies. *Times*, 2 Dec 33, p. 13.
- ¹⁵² For example, the Government was criticised for failing to act on subsidies to foreign shipping. *Mail*, 3 May 1934, p. 12.
- ¹⁵³ *Express*, 9 Nov 1938, p. 12.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Express*, Sept 30 1930, p. 8.
- ¹⁵⁵ For example, many of the 'Quiet Corner' items in the *Mirror* are based on the pleasure and quiet contentment of domesticity and private life, see 7 Sep 1935, p. 7; 14 Sep 1935, p. 12; 6 Feb 1936, p. 14; 20 Mar 1936, p. 14; 25 Mar 1936, p. 12; 7 Oct 1936, p. 17; & 14 Oct 1936, p. 26.
- ¹⁵⁶ See, for example, the 'Lady of no Leisure' column in the *Express*, 2 Aug 1939, p. 11, recording life on board a liner crossing the Atlantic.
- ¹⁵⁷ John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945* (Penguin Books, London, 1984), p. 178.
- ¹⁵⁸ For example, Greta Garbo's marital plans excited considerable interest, see *Express*, 8 Mar 1938, p. 10; & 18 Mar 1938, p. 1. The *Express* also reported the arrival of several celebrities on the *Queen Mary*, see 29 Mar 1938, p. 10. Other examples include Godfrey Winn's 'My Personality Parade', *Mirror*, 11 Aug 1936, p. 9; 12 Aug 1936, p. 9.; & 28 Oct 1936, p. 11; Charles Graves' column 'I See Life', *Mail*, 2 Aug 1939, p. 6; and the 'William Hickey' column, 'These Names Make News', *Express*, 12 Feb 1934, p. 6; 15 Feb 1934, p. 6; & 21 Feb 1934, p. 6.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Times*, 26 Nov 1937, p. 21. See also 14 Jun 1939, p. 19 for space saving, though potentially lethal, ideas for a small nursery. The *Telegraph* advised readers how to achieve 'country house living in the modified modern manner.' The illustration showed the living room of a recently built house that was said to be appropriate for rural living, and used recovered timber in a contemporary manner that combined the traditional and the modern, *Telegraph*, 11 Aug 1939, p. 8.
- ¹⁶⁰ For examples, see *Times*, 9 Oct 1935, p. 15; 17 Jul 1936, p. 12; 24, Jan 1938, p. 17; & 7 Mar 1938, p. 19.
- ¹⁶¹ *Mail*, 13 Sep 1930, p. 5; 19 Sep 1930, p. 10; 22 Sep 1930, p. 10; 30 Sep 1930, p. 10; & 9 Apr 1931, p. 10.

-
- ¹⁶² *Mirror*, 27 Feb 1930, p. 16.
- ¹⁶³ *Mirror*, 5 Feb 1931, p. 9; 17 Jul 1931, p. 11; 8 Mar 1934, p. 9; & 12 Jan 1935, p. 9.
- ¹⁶⁴ *Express*, 10 Mar 1933, p. 19; 13 Mar 1933, p. 19; 15 Mar 1933, p. 19; 16 Mar 1933, p. 19; & 23 Mar 1933, p. 19.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Express*, 20 Mar 1933, p. 21 & 28 Mar 1933, p. 19.
- ¹⁶⁶ See, for example, Hayden Talbot's articles full of gossip and tales of corruption in Hollywood. *Express*, 21 Apr 1931, p. 10 & 29 Apr 1931, p. 8; Seton Margrave in the *Mail*, 30 Sep 1934, p. 12; 23 Mar 1938, p. 10; or Molly Castle's column in the *Mirror*, 18 Feb 1938, p. 11; 18 Apr 1938, p. 17; 26 Apr 1938, p. 18; & 3 May 1938, p. 18.
- ¹⁶⁷ In 1931 advice for debutantes was provided, but in 1933 'The Dragoman' claimed to be 'driven almost to suicide by the savage and monotonous festivities of the London Season.' *Express*, 30 Apr 1931, p. 10 & 22 Mar 1933, p. 19. In the same year Gordon Beckles described it as the best circus in the world, but in 1934 he claimed that the Season had been dead for fourteen years, it just would not lie down. *Express*, 1 May 1933, p. 10; & 30 Apr 1934, p. 12.
- ¹⁶⁸ *Express*, 16 Mar 1938, p. 10.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Express*, 17 Nov 1938, p. 1.
- ¹⁷⁰ *Mail*, 29 Mar 1938, p. 10.
- ¹⁷¹ *Mail*, 14 Aug 1939, p. 15.
- ¹⁷² See for example, *Mail*, 23 Aug 1939, p. 18 & 28 Aug 1939, p. 14.
- ¹⁷³ Cited in Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Building A British Superman: Physical Culture In Interwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 41 no. 4, (2006), p. 598.
- ¹⁷⁴ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004), p. 219.
- ¹⁷⁵ For example see Driberg's account of watching compulsive gamblers leaving the casino in Monte Carlo at 9.30am, *Express*, 30 Apr 1931, p. 10; or Charles Graves' report from holiday on the Riviera, *Mail*, 16 Aug 1939, p. 6.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Mail*, 10 Feb 1933, p. 10.
- ¹⁷⁷ *Mirror*, 23 Sep 1932, p. 11 & 26 Sep 1932, p. 9. *Express*, 6 Apr 1933, p. 11, 2 May 1933, p. 3; & 11 May 1933, p. 2.

-
- ¹⁷⁸ *Mirror*, 9 Jun 1930, p. 17; 10 May 1934, p. 9. *Express*, 7 Apr 1933, p. 11; 18 May 1933, p. 10; 26 May 1933, p. 20 & 13 Dec 1938, p. 5.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Mirror*, 27 Feb 1932, p. 11; & *Mail*, 22 Nov 1938, p. 5.
- ¹⁸⁰ ‘Office Hours’ in the *Express*, 7 Apr 1931, p. 7. ‘Little Wife’ in the *Mail*, 5 Sep 1930, p. 5; & 11 Sep 1930, p. 5. ‘Jane’ in the *Mirror*, featured lantern-jawed, fighter pilot Freddie, see for example 2 Jan 1939, p. 9; 5 Apr 1939, p. 9. Also in the *Mirror*, ‘Buck Ryan’ 24 Aug 1938, p. 20.
- ¹⁸¹ *Mirror*, 27 Feb 1930, p. 6; 2 Apr 1930, p. 6; 18 Aug 1930, p.6; 22 Dec 1930, p. 6; 6 Jan 1931, p. 6; 30 Jan 1931, p. 6; & 4 Feb 1931, p. 6.
- ¹⁸² *Mail*, 2 Sep 1930, p. 5; 9 Sep 1930, p. 5.; & 17 Sep 1930, p. 5.
- ¹⁸³ *Mirror*, 24 Aug 1935, p. 8; 26 Aug 1935, p. 6; 30 Aug 1935, p. 13; & 3 Sep 1935, p. 13.
- ¹⁸⁴ *Mail*, 3 Aug 1939, p.7.
- ¹⁸⁵ *Mail*, 7 Feb 1933, p. 19.
- ¹⁸⁶ *Express*, 23 Feb 1933, p. 5.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Mirror*, 5 Jun 1936, p. 16.
- ¹⁸⁸ Stevenson, pp. 165-6.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Light*, pp. 83-4.
- ¹⁹⁰ Sapper was the penname of H C McNeile (188-1937), see Jonathon Green, ‘McNeile, (Herman) Cyril (1888–1937)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34810>. [18 Aug 2007].
- ¹⁹¹ Julie Gottlieb, ‘Britain’s New Fascist Men’ in Gottlieb & Linehan (eds), p. 85.
- ¹⁹² Hugh Ross Williamson. ‘Youth’s Alternative: Fascism or Communism’, *Everyman*, 6 Apr 1934, p. 179. Originally a Congregationalist, Williamson (1901-1978) later became an Anglican priest before converting to Catholicism.
- ¹⁹³ Originally published in the National Labour fortnightly paper *The News Letter* and reprinted in the *Nottingham Guardian*, 2 Feb 1934, p. 2.
- ¹⁹⁴ Bingham, pp. 229-31.
- ¹⁹⁵ *Mirror*, 7 Apr 1931, p. 3. *Times*, 22 Apr 1930, p. 7; 7 Apr 1931, p. 16; 29 Mar 1932, p. 7; 18 Apr 1933, p. 16; 2 Apr 1934, p. 5; 22 Apr 1935, p. 12; 13 Apr 1936, p. 6; 14 Apr 1936, p. 16; 29 Mar 1937, p. 6; & 19 Apr 1938, p.7. Miss Charlotte Cowdroy, headmistress of Crouch End High School for Girls expressed

similar views to the NAS. She asserted that boys taught by women were more likely to become criminals and claimed that even though an individual man might have less qualifications or teaching ability than an individual woman the fact remained that he was a man and, therefore, better suited to teaching boys. The *Mirror*'s leader column described Miss Cowdroy's views as 'utter rubbish' and suggested that 'the old "make a man of him" type of training erred on the side of a cruelty that "hardened" men into criminals much more often than it made them heroes.' *Mirror*, 14 Jul 1932, pp. 8 & 9. Another female teacher supported the NAS view on teaching boys at the 1934 conference on the grounds that only by having a male teacher could the normal development of a boy's masculinity be hoped for. *Mail*, 2 Apr 1934, p. 3.

¹⁹⁶ On one occasion the *Times* did mention that the NAS had restated, with its 'usual moderation and fairness', the argument that, where possible, boys should be taught by men, however, it also pointed out that this was not a concern expressed at other educational conferences. *Times*, 18 Apr 1936, p. 13.

Throughout the inter-war period governments were considering changes to the education system. Between 1920 and 1934 the consultative commission of the Board of Education, chaired by Sir Henry Hadow, produced six reports. F. H. Shera, 'Hadow, Sir (William) Henry (1859–1937)', rev. David J. Golby, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2006. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33631>. [23 Mar 2010]. A *Times* editorial supported the conclusions of a Board of Education report on secondary education which included revision of the curriculum to make it less bookish and the setting up of technical high schools, providing a liberal education with a more realistic and scientific curriculum, for those for whom grammar schools are not appropriate. *Times*, 30 Dec 1938, p. 11.

¹⁹⁷ Bourke, pp. 193–7. *Times* 23 Apr 1935, p. 16.

¹⁹⁸ *Times*, 22 Apr 1930, p. 7.

¹⁹⁹ *Express* 15 Sep 1930, p. 10.

²⁰⁰ *Times*, 18 Jul 1931, p. 9.

²⁰¹ *Express*, 16 Mar 1933, p. 10.

²⁰² *Times*, 'National Health Number', 30 Sep 1937, p. xxvi.

²⁰³ *Times*, 'National Health Number', 30 Sep 1937, p. xxxii.

-
- ²⁰⁴ *Telegraph* 15 Aug 1939, p.9 & 24 Aug 1939, p. 8.
- ²⁰⁵ *Light*, pp.12 & 145
- ²⁰⁶ *Light*, pp.118, & 123-4.
- ²⁰⁷ *Times*, 6 Oct 1937, p. 17. The 'Mrs Miniver' of the *Times*, while popular and charming, was of higher social standing than the ordinary village housewife of the popular wartime film of the same name.
- ²⁰⁸ Bingham, p. 86-93.
- ²⁰⁹ 'Home Page Baby', provided advice on childcare. *Express*, 1 Aug 1939, p.11. The *Mirror* also gave advice on rearing children, for example see 'Must Boys Be Bad?', 7 Aug 1935, p. 23; & 'Have a Nursery Time-Table', 7 Oct 1936, p. 27; 'Showing Off', 14 Oct 1936, p. 26; & 'Is your little boy unwilling to run errand?', 11 Nov 1936, p. 27. For advice on being 'taken out' by men, see *Mail*, 13 Sep 1930, p. 5; 'One girl on her own' *Express*, 7 Mar 1939, p. 13; 'Lady of no Leisure' *Express*, 4 Jan 1939, p. 11; 4 Jan 1939, p. 11. The *Mail*'s 'Women's Bureau' answered readers' queries on childcare, cookery, housewifery, dress and beauty, *Mail*, 7 Feb 1933, p. 19; 18 Feb 1933, p. 14 & 25 Feb 1933, p.14.
- ²¹⁰ *Mail*, 4 Feb 1933, p. 9; 7 Feb 1933, pp. 7 & 10; 17 Dec 1939, p. 10. *Express*, 4 Feb 1933, p. 9; 10 Feb 1933, p. 10; & 21 Mar 1933, p.10.
- ²¹¹ For examples discussing women's discretion and suitability for high office see, *Express* 30 Sep 1930, p. 8; & *Express*, 8 May 1933, p. 10.
- ²¹² *Express* 21 Apr 1931, p. 10.
- ²¹³ Writing in the *Express*, 'The Dragoman' promoted the more esoteric forms of female employment. Twice in March 1933 he publicised the flower shop recently opened by Lady Diana Cooper and two other well-known women, and shortly after praised two women whose occupations were outside the experience of most female readers. One was the portrait painter Alice Burton, a young woman of '[c]haracter and ability,' and the other was 'Mariana, the alluring West Indian dancer,' who had left convent life behind her and was 'stirring dangerously spring-like emotions in the hearts of London's tired business men.' *Express*, 10 Mar 1933, p. 19; 21 Mar 1933, p. 19 & 22 Mar 1933, p. 19.
- ²¹⁴ *Mail*, 1 Sep 1930, p. 7.
- ²¹⁵ *Mail*, 9 Sep 1930, p. 11.

²¹⁶ *Express*, 11 May 1933, p. 10. A point ignored by Leese in his assumption that women could and should be supported by their parents or husbands.

²¹⁷ Some writers advised women not to marry at all. One, writing anonymously in the *Mirror*, complained that her life had been ruined by marriage. She had no instinct for motherhood, though she wanted to do her best for her son, and felt she was stagnating in a marriage in which being ‘pals’ had replaced being in love. She wanted to return to work, but lacked the courage to defy social conventions. *Mirror*, 16 Sep 1935, p. 12. Another women wrote to the *Mail*’s Ann Temple expressing similar concerns, she was about to give up her career to marry a man she loved very much, but feared that she would find little satisfaction in life as a housewife. *Mail*, 16 Aug 1939, p. 15.

²¹⁸ *Express*, 14 Mar 1938, p. 4; 15 Mar 1938, p. 13; & 17 Mar 1938, p. 13. For examples of other articles on marriage see *Express*, 12 Sep 1930, p. 10; 1 Aug 1934, p. 8; 23 Jan 1939, p. 12; 24 Jan 1939, p. 13; 25 Jan 1939, p. 12; 26 Jan 1939, p. 13; & 24 Mar 1939, p. 12. *Mail*, 3 Nov 1938, p. 12

²¹⁹ *Mirror*, 5 Mar 1937, p. 14.

²²⁰ *Mail*, 1 Aug 1939, p. 8. Earlier the *Mail* had published a short story by Penelope King that contrasted the grasping and cynical former girlfriend of a young Englishman and his humble and appreciative Eskimo bride who made few claims on life but was steadfast in her belief in her husband. The Eskimo bride was the ideal wife, having the qualities that ‘modern’ women lacked. *Mail*, 12 Feb 1934, p. 18.

²²¹ *Mirror*, 2 Apr 1936, p.14. This view of a women’s role is reinforced in ‘Morning Prayer’, which concludes ‘And when the day is ended I’ll be waiting in my place – To welcome home my loved one with a calm and happy face.’ *Mirror*, 28 Aug 1935, p. 6. When the wife becomes a mother Strong notes that ‘her little hands are worn’ with all the tasks a mother performs in service to her family, without thought for herself. *Mirror*, 26 Mar 1936, p. 12.

²²² *Mirror*, 9 Mar 1936, p. 9.

²²³ *Express*, 16 Aug 1939, p. 4 & 16 Mar 1939, p.12. *Mail*, 1 Aug 1939, p. 10; 16 Aug 1939, p. 11; & 31 Aug 1939, p. 11.

²²⁴ The *Mirror*, 11 Nov 1936, p.27, advised readers not to crush their fingers in the mangle, to keep poisons clearly marked and on a high shelf, and not to touch

electric switches with wet hands. A doctor gave emergency first aid advice in the *Mirror*, 21 Jan 1938, p.12. The *Mirror* also offered readers a first aid book for mothers, sponsored by one of its advertisers, 12 Jul 1932, p. 5; and a advice on a first aid kit for children going camping appeared on 5 Aug 1936, p. 23. The *Express*, 5 Jan 1939, p. 8, advised readers on how to avoid the ‘flu, colds and other complaints. Lord Corvedale advised how to make the most of the time spent in bed recovering from influenza. *Mail*, 24 Mar 1938, p. 12. The *Mirror*’s psychologist advised how to prevent nervous breakdowns, 6 Mar 1936, p. 14.

²²⁵ *Times*, ‘National Health Number’, 30 Sep 1937, p. x. The resources associated with the campaign were limited, but grants were available to Local Authorities and local voluntary organisations to assist in providing sports facilities. The *Times* published a forty-page national health supplement in support of the campaign. The supplement was about more than physical fitness, and the leader column identified public health measures and personal hygiene as the most significant issues in terms of improving the nation’s health and praised Chamberlain’s record of improvement in the National Health Service. The desired outcome of the campaign was an informed public, who would be inspired to take the necessary action to improve their health and fitness. *Times*, ‘National Health Number’, 30 Sep 1937, p. iii. A wide breadth of health related issues was covered, including, the new GP contracts, hospitals, environmental health, mental health, dental health, TB, VD, Maternity and child welfare, Boys’ Clubs, Girls’ Clubs, physical culture, health in the home and the workplace, and the modern public house among others. *Times*, ‘National Health Number’, 30 Sep 1937, pp. iv-xxx.

²²⁶ *Times* 1 Aug 1938, p. 11.

²²⁷ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, pp. 602-606.

²²⁸ *Times*, ‘National Health Number’, 30 Sep 1937, p. xvi.

²²⁹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, pp. 602-6, & 609.

²³⁰ *Mirror*, 13 Mar 1937, p. 13.

²³¹ *Mail*, 20 Sep 1930, p. 10; & 25 Sep 1930, p. 8.

²³² *Mail*, 26 Sep 1930, p. 8. See also 30 Sep 1930, p. 10, where, despite an admittedly gloomy September, it was confidently expressed that October would bring ‘golden days.’

-
- ²³³ *Express*, 23 Sep 1930, p. 10.
- ²³⁴ *Express*, 12 Mar 1938, p. 12 & 26 Mar 1938, p. 10
- ²³⁵ *Mail*, 3 Aug 1938, p. 8.
- ²³⁶ *Express*, 22 Jun 1938, p. 10.
- ²³⁷ *Express*, 1 Mar 1938, p. 10.
- ²³⁸ *Times*, 14 April 1940, p. 18.
- ²³⁹ Stone, 'The Far Right', p.186. Dan Stone *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933-1939 Before War and Holocaust* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 151-2.
- ²⁴⁰ *Times*, 10 Jul 1930, p. 12; 19 Jul 1930, p.10; 2 Oct 1933, p. 8; 16 Oct 1933, p. 22; 23 Oct 1933, p. 25; 30 Oct 1933, p.8; & 6 Nov 1933, p. 25.
- ²⁴¹ *Times*, 6 Oct 1931, p. 18; 8 Dec 1931, p. 9; 26 Sep 1933, p. 8; 9 Mar 1934, p. 9; 3 Apr 1934, p.16; & 10 Jul 1934, p. 10.
- ²⁴² *Times*, 8 Jul 1930, p. 19; 15 Apr 1932, p. 8; 3 Jul 1934, p. 14; 23 Apr 1937, p. 19; & 22 Mar 1938, p. 10.
- ²⁴³ *Times*, 8 Jul 1931, p. 7. 20 Jan 1936, p. 3; 21 Jan 1936, p. 5; 7 Jul 1936, p. 28; 13 Aug 1936, p. 4.; & 15 Aug 1936, p. 13. In 1937 he was reported to have spoken at the Ladies Imperial Association on 'The Place of Agriculture in Home Defence' see *Times*, 15 Apr 1937, p.19. *Telegraph*, 15 Feb 1934, p. 14.
- ²⁴⁴ 9 Jul 1931, p. 12; & 1 Mar 1934, p.19.
- ²⁴⁵ For more detailed analysis see Richard Moore-Colyer & Philip Conford, 'A "Secret Society"? The Internal and External Relations of the Kinship in Husbandry, 1941-52', *Rural History* vol. 15, no. 2 (2004), pp.189-206. Stone, *Responses to Nazism*, pp. 148-88.
- ²⁴⁶ *Times*, 8 Sep 1934, p.10.; 7 Nov 1934, p. 14. 21 Jun 1935, p. 14. *Telegraph*, 6 Feb 1934, p. 17; 7 Feb 1934, p. 8; 15 Feb 1934, p. 14.
- ²⁴⁷ *Telegraph*, 17 Feb 1934, p. 17.
- ²⁴⁸ *Times*, 28 Oct 1932, p. 17; 26 Mar 1935, p. 10; & 26 Apr 1935, p. 14.
- ²⁴⁹ *Times*, 12 Jun 1931, p. 14; & 22 Jul 1938, p. 9.
- ²⁵⁰ Stevenson, p.434.
- ²⁵¹ *Express*, 16 Aug 1932, p.1. See also 30 Nov 1938, p. 7, reproduction of one of the drawings Epstein produced to illustrate Baudelaire's *The Flowers of Evil*. At

times the *Mirror* adopted the same approach, see ‘Mr Epstein’s Big Secret Hush-Hush over 11ft Carving’, 28 Feb 1935, p. 25.

²⁵² *Mirror*, 20 May 1930, p. 9; 8 July 1931 p. 7; 26 Apr 1933, p. 5; 6 Dec 1933, p. 1; & 10 Apr 1935, p. 1. *Times*, 2 Jun 1930, p. 12; 17 Feb 1932, p. 17; 23 Feb 1932, p. 12; 23 Apr 1932, p. 10; 24 Jul 1933, p. 10; 27 Dec 1934, p. 12; 7 Mar 1935, p. 12; 10 Apr 1935, p. 16; & 8 Jun 1939, p. 21.

²⁵³ *Mirror*, 6 Mar 1935, p. 1; 7 Mar 1935, p. 5; 8 Mar 1935, pp. 1 & 6; & 9 Mar 1935, p. 12. See also *Times*, 29 Oct 1937, p. 12, for a letter objecting to *Consummatum Est* on religious grounds. The *Mirror*, 21 Oct 1937, p. 3, did print a photograph of this representation of Christ.

²⁵⁴ *Express*, 10 Mar, 1933, p. 6.

²⁵⁵ *Express*, 17 Jun 1932, p. 10.

²⁵⁶ *Mail*, 30 April 1931, p. 17.

²⁵⁷ *Mail*, 15 Dec 1938, p. 12.

²⁵⁸ *Mirror*, 6 May 1933, p. 10. *Express*, 16 May 1934, p. 10. *Times*, 2 Jun 1937, p. 12; & 28 Jun 1937, p. 15.

²⁵⁹ Frank Trommler, ‘The Creation Of A Culture Of *Sachlichkeit*’ in Geoff Eley (ed.) *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany 1870-1930* (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1996), pp. 465-485.

²⁶⁰ *Express*, 24 Mar 1933, p. 12.

MEDIA RESPONSES TO MOSLEY AND THE BUF¹

As we have seen, the mainstream press viewed British society in a more optimistic and positive manner than did the fascist movements. While there were some aspects of fascist policy that resonated with elements of the mainstream, there were such significant differences that the majority of the mainstream press regarded the British fascists as either cranks such as the BF and the IFL or, in the case of the BUF, as adopting a position inconsistent with the dominant perception of British society and political life. Although British fascists claimed that the mainstream media was part of a Jewish inspired anti-fascist conspiracy, the range of response from the British media to fascism in Britain was diverse and subject to change. By concentrating on the reporting of the activities of Mosley and the BUF this chapter seeks to establish whether the British media situated the BUF outside of the mainstream and if, thereby, they contributed to the anti-fascist cause. Additionally, the extent to which the BUF's reaction to what it perceived as a conspiracy against it and its tendency to turn inward and become self-contained will be examined to assess if, given the mutual antipathy between the BUF and the majority of the mainstream press, the movement can be seen as a viable counter culture.

THE BUF AND THE MEDIA

The response of the mainstream press to British fascism has attracted little analysis and there is no definitive assessment of the extent to which the British media could be described as anti-fascist. Their response to fascism was complex and varied, and for some elements of the media there was a dichotomy in their attitudes to fascism that

makes the categorisation of their stance in terms of anti-fascism problematic. This was particularly noticeable in the Tory press where the expression of tolerance for, and, in the popular press, admiration of, the fascist regimes in Italy and Germany was initially commonplace. Even when these papers began to voice their opposition to Mosley and the BUF their criticism did not necessarily extend to other forms of fascism, though, as mentioned earlier, criticism of the policies of the Nazi regime became increasingly frequent as the 1930s progressed. The expression of opposition to British fascism came in three distinct forms: firstly, the dismissal or ridicule of the organisations and individuals concerned; secondly, the provision of a platform for those articulating anti-fascist opinions; and, thirdly, the encouragement of the confrontation of fascism and the advocacy of a popular front against it. In only one instance, that of the *News Chronicle*, can all three forms be found.

The variations of anti-fascism in the mainstream media have not been fully considered and academic attention has focussed on the support given to the BUF by the Rothermere press during the period January to July 1934.² The element of the historiography most relevant to this chapter is the debate between Martin Pugh and Jon Lawrence, sparked by their differing interpretations of the significance of Olympia.³ Although the main focus of their analysis is the response of the Conservative party, they both consider the reaction of the mainstream press in the lead up to and the aftermath of Mosley's meeting at Olympia in June 1934. Pugh maintains that Olympia was not a propaganda disaster for the BUF as it attracted more press attention and reports in the Tory press were not hostile. On the other hand, Lawrence argues that revulsion at fascist violence at Olympia alienated the Conservative press and political opinion, and was a significant factor in the failure of British fascism. Of the two, Lawrence's reading of the Conservative press sources is more convincing and his argument takes some account of the developments in the

response of the mainstream press to the BUF following the violence at Olympia. Pugh offers a more cursory survey of press attitudes. In *Hurrah for the Blackshirts*, he points out that, following Rothermere's withdrawal of support, the *Mail*, the *Times*, and the *Telegraph* continued to report Mosley's speeches, and the *News Chronicle*, the *Express*, the *Manchester Guardian*, and the *Herald* were hostile to the BUF.⁴ This is a very broad-brush approach, not entirely consistent with his earlier analysis, and appears to categorise the papers as either covertly for or openly against the BUF.⁵ Pugh's division of the press into two camps suggests that the reporting of BUF meetings provided encouragement to the fascist cause. This chapter questions that approach and, for the first time, clearly differentiates the range of stances taken by individual newspapers.

During the early 1930s the attitude of the mainstream newspapers towards the BUF was not fixed, and in the majority of papers it took some time for a consistent policy on British fascism to develop, therefore the section on reporting the BUF is divided into two parts, pre- and post-Olympia. Mosley's Olympia meeting was held on 7 June 1934 and had been heavily promoted by the Rothermere press. In addition to BUF members, many political and society figures attended as well as members of the public, curious to hear what Mosley had to offer. Also among the audience were a significant number of anti-fascists who heckled Mosley and were violently ejected from the meeting. The excessive force used outraged many of those present and led to widespread condemnation of the BUF's methods.⁶ For most of the mainstream media the events at Olympia represented a clear demonstration that Britain was not immune to the violent excesses of continental fascism, a point that was reinforced by the violence and disregard for legal process exhibited during Germany's Night of the Long Knives. Subsequent editorial comment reflected a heightened awareness of the potential threat to democracy posed by the BUF.

From the founding of the BUF to Olympia: a minor excitement

Initially, the response of the mainstream media to Mosley and the BUF was not hostile. This was consistent with attitudes to fascism in Italy and Germany during the early 1930s. The mainstream press generally regarded both with a degree of complacency, despite reservations regarding the methods used to suppress opposition.⁷ Regardless of the expressions of tolerance, and in some cases enthusiasm, for fascism outside of Britain, there was a distinct lack of interest in the homegrown variety. From the beginning, fascist organisations in Britain had rarely attracted press attention, and the occasional reports of their activities were not supportive. The British Fascists were widely regarded as insignificant, and the more extreme National Fascists, despite being described by the *Manchester Guardian* as 'Dangerous Play-Boys' who were a nuisance during a time of industrial unrest, were also seen as being of no consequence.⁸ Apart from the trial of Arnold Leese for seditious libel in 1936, the Imperial Fascist League was only mentioned in the mainstream press when they caused a disturbance, for example, when they courted controversy by flying a Union flag embellished with a swastika from prominent buildings or when their meetings were disrupted.⁹ Disappointingly, from Mosley's point of view, reports in the mainstream press of the BUF's early meetings were similar in tone to reports of other fascist organisations in Britain and, while the BUF generated more coverage than the others, it was not generally encouraging.

Mosley had been a figure of interest to the press for some time before the founding of the BUF and he provided a touch of glamour that earlier manifestations of British fascism lacked. Indeed, Julie Gottlieb has described him as the 'Rudolph Valentino of Fascism.'¹⁰ He was the youngest member of the House when he was first elected as a Conservative MP. His first wife, Cynthia, was a noted society

heiress, and their joint defection to the Labour party fuelled many column inches in the national press. His decision to leave the Labour party and set up the New Party also attracted press interest, though this was not as enthusiastic as he had hoped. The founding of the BUF roused little interest in the mainstream press and the emphasis was often on Mosley's 'society' life rather than his political ambitions.¹¹ A portrait photograph of Mosley, seated at his desk, published in the *Sketch*, was typical of his representation in the popular press. Mosley was described as 'looking the complete British Fascist,' but there was no mention of the BUF's policies or activities.¹²

A notable exception to the general indifference shown by the British press to Mosley's political aspirations was an article by G. Ward Price in the *Mail*, which appeared immediately prior to the official launch of the BUF in October 1932 and coincided with the publication of Mosley's book, *The Greater Britain*. Ward Price, an admirer of Mussolini and Hitler, praised Mosley's courage and ability, promoted *The Greater Britain*, and agreed with Mosley's claim that fascism was a 'world-wide modern creed.'¹³

According to Nicholas Mosley, press reports of his father's speeches during the first six months of the BUF's existence concentrated on the presence of Mosley's family, references to Jews and incidents of violence.¹⁴ There is ample evidence to endorse this reading of press reaction to the launch of the BUF.¹⁵ The mainstream press appear to have viewed British fascism as inhabiting the political margins, and it was rare for Mosley to find mainstream papers willing to publish his propaganda. Seizing one such opportunity, offered by the *Mirror*, Mosley complained that the ideology and philosophy of the BUF were dismissed or ignored while trivial incidents of violence were misrepresented as fascist brutality. Although aggrieved by the lack of press interest in the BUF's political programme, Mosley was adamant that the BUF neither needed nor desired the 'hothouse of a sudden and artificial publicity.'¹⁶ When

the Rothermere press swung its considerable weight behind the 'Blackshirts' in January 1934, the movement appeared poised to move into the mainstream.

Pugh has suggested that Rothermere's support for the 'Blackshirts' was based not on any appreciation of the virtues of fascism, but on a desire to use the movement to pressure the Conservative party into adopting policies more in line with Rothermere's own views.¹⁷ Comparison of reports of BUF meetings from the *Daily Mail* and the *Blackshirt* supports this argument. Coverage in the *Mail* focussed on issues dear to Rothermere's heart, particularly the Empire. *Blackshirt* reports of the same meetings said little about the Empire and concentrated on Mosley's ability to hold an audience, local issues, 'Reds' and the failures of the parliamentary parties.¹⁸ In keeping with the fascist tendency to deification of the leader, other speakers were given less coverage in the *Blackshirt* and what was reported generally bore little resemblance to what appeared in the *Mail*.¹⁹ From the way that his papers represented the Blackshirts, it is clear that Rothermere had a limited understanding of the fascist agenda and that he did not fully endorse its revolutionary potential. Nonetheless, he did encourage his papers to portray the movement as relevant and necessary for the rejuvenation of British society and consequently the Rothermere press continued to present the BUF as a vital part of the mainstream.

Despite the sometimes-strained relationship between Rothermere and Mosley, the attempt by the *Sunday Dispatch* to organise a Blackshirt beauty competition being perhaps the most ludicrous illustration of their divergent perceptions of the movement, the Rothermere press was relentless in its promotion of the Blackshirts as the saviours of the nation and repeatedly urged readers to join their ranks.²⁰ It even became the fashion to wear a black shirt in the *Mail* offices. When Rothermere withdrew his support the news editor sent one of the paper's correspondents in Berlin

a telegram that said: 'The Blackshirts are in the wash and the colour is running very fast.'²¹

The support of the Rothermere papers, particularly that of the *Mail*, led to a rapid increase in membership of the BUF and forced other British papers, momentarily, to take notice. Although the *Express* and the *Mirror* shared the *Mail*'s generally positive attitude to the continental dictators, the popular press was divided in its response to the rapidly increasing presence of the BUF. Rothermere and Beaverbrook continued to cooperate on campaigns to save the British Empire and to defeat the perceived threat of the Co-ops, but Beaverbrook did not share Rothermere's enthusiasm for the Blackshirts. In the *Express*, Beaverbrook was quick to defend democratic principles as essential to the continuation of the Empire.²² He also allowed Tom Driberg who penned the 'William Hickey' column 'These Names Make News', an unusual degree of latitude in his attacks on Mosley.²³ Apart from reporting occasional court cases, the *Express* ignored the BUF's activities, having advised its readers not to worry about 'Shirts' as if it became necessary to save the country it would be decided, as previously, by 'grown-up citizens ... through legitimately elected representatives.'²⁴ In the *Evening Standard*, Beaverbrook gave the cartoonist David Low free rein to produce a number of cartoons that highlighted Mosley's arrogance and the Blackshirts' brutality.²⁵ Beaverbrook was clearly keen that the BUF remained outside the mainstream and below the political radar.

Another major element of the popular press, the *Mirror*, had a tendency to blow hot and cold when it came to the Blackshirts. The reports of court proceedings in cases such as the tithe dispute, the castor oil allegations, and charges of violence were couched in the neutral tones adopted by the rest of the mainstream press.²⁶ However, in January 1934 the *Mirror* reprinted an appeal by Rothermere for recruits for the Blackshirts that had originally been published in the *Sunday Pictorial*.²⁷

Subsequent coverage did not reflect the patriotic, disciplined and tolerant movement that Rothermere had described. On occasion the *Mirror*'s reports treated Mosley's meetings as a spectacle and were full of detail regarding the venue, the numbers of Blackshirts, and Mosley's arrival, but failed to mention the content of the speeches.²⁸ Other reports concentrated solely on the BUF's policy.²⁹ While some reports took a light-hearted tone, others suggested a darker side to the BUF that did suggest that the movement was outside the mainstream.³⁰

Uniquely, among the mainstream popular press, the *Daily Herald* concentrated its energies on opposing continental fascism. This was consistent with Labour party policy, which was predicated on an understanding of fascism that correlated the rise of fascism with the growth of communism, and saw violent confrontation as counter-productive. By ignoring the BUF, the paper hoped to prevent it gaining publicity and to restrict its activity to the political margins. With only a couple of notable exceptions, the *Herald* did not actively campaign against British varieties of fascism and urged readers to avoid confrontation with the BUF. One exception was the printing of Oliver Baldwin's fierce rejection of fascism on behalf of British youth during which he savaged Rothermere's arguments for supporting the Blackshirts.³¹ There was also an editorial pointing out the fallacy of Rothermere's claim that the BUF was not antisemitic.³² Hannen Swaffer, the *Herald*'s gossip columnist, frequently mocked Mosley and the Blackshirts and was threatened by fascists who objected to his column.³³ In similar vein to Swaffer's mocking was a report of a BUF meeting that undermined Mosley's alleged charisma and much vaunted abilities as a speaker, and accused him of making even his own followers yawn.³⁴ Interestingly, Lawrence notes that, prior to Olympia, the Communist party's response to British fascism was very similar in practice to that of the Labour party, viewing fascism as a continental problem. Like much of the mainstream media, the *Daily Worker*'s attitude

towards the BUF swung between indifference and ridicule. However, in the days before the Olympia meeting readers were encouraged to take a more confrontational approach.³⁵

The quality Conservative papers, the *Times* and the *Telegraph*, remained largely unimpressed. They did not trouble their readers with polemics for or against the movement, although the *Times* reminded its readers that while the electorate required constructive action this should not be misconstrued as a desire for dictatorship.³⁶ Both the *Times* and the *Telegraph* continued to report incidents of violence, Mosley's court cases and other occurrences involving the police or the courts.³⁷ The reporting of Mosley's speeches should not be taken as giving tacit support; the *Times* recorded that the people of Birmingham were uninspired by Mosley's creed of action.³⁸ Other speeches were reported in a more neutral manner.³⁹ The BUF was plainly perceived to be of minor interest and politically insignificant.

The *Observer* justified publishing an article on the BUF on the grounds of the movement's rapid growth and Rothermere's support. Mosley was described as a sincere speaker who argued his case well, though the *Observer* passed no judgement on the merits of that argument.⁴⁰ The *Observer* also gave publicity to the creation of a BUF branch in Berlin, and to a speech by Mosley in which he attacked Conservative leaders who criticised the 'British Blackshirts as foreign imports while they worshipped at the shrine of an Italian Jew.'⁴¹ This level of interest indicates that the paper perceived some potential for change in the political standing of the BUF.

Surprisingly, although they would prove to be the most dedicatedly anti-fascist of all the mainstream press, some of the liberal papers were initially more accommodating. Although it was the *News Chronicle* that campaigned most strongly against fascism, prior to Rothermere's involvement some of its articles appeared to flirt with the ideology and the leaders of fascism. Disparagement of the National

Government and of Parliament was frequent. A. J. Cummings was critical of the ineffectiveness of both the Government and the Opposition and claimed that there were 'no young politicians in any party with a glimmer of promise.'⁴² A week later, Cummings developed this theme, claiming that young men in Britain 'have gone flabby' and that generally speaking the British Parliament was 'a collection of nonentities' incapable of challenging the 'old gang.' The only politician Cummings saw as having any potential was Oswald Mosley, who was criticised for having 'remained so silent in the midst of our national emergencies that he runs the risk of disappearing from public memory.'⁴³ The tone of reports relating to fascist activities appears to have been one of amused tolerance; one report described athletic and picturesque young men giving fascist salutes, but unable to answer questions.⁴⁴ A similar tongue-in-cheek tone was adopted in reporting the short-lived political career of Serocold Skeels, who left the Imperial Fascist League to stand as parliamentary candidate for the United British Party.⁴⁵

However, the *News Chronicle*'s editor, Aylmer Vallance, made clear his personal political stance:

Parliament is a sadly imperfect machine? Agreed. But the remedy is to reform Parliamentary procedure – no insuperable task – and not to weakly hand over our responsibilities as citizens to a ruling gang. Against fascism in this country I would fight to my last breath.⁴⁶

Following Rothermere's announcement of support for the Blackshirts the paper began to take a more robust attitude to British fascism. The next day, while maintaining that the British electorate would not be 'seduced from their faith in democracy' by dubious promises of 'Action' and 'discipline,' its editorial cautioned that, with Rothermere promoting the possibility of a continental style dictatorship, 'farce takes on a more sinister complexion.'⁴⁷ The paper also printed the views of politicians, trade union leaders and other public figures opposed to fascism.⁴⁸ The *News Chronicle* continued to ridicule Rothermere's enthusiasm for the Blackshirts,

while acknowledging Mosley as a more serious concern, albeit one that was unlikely to develop into a serious threat to democracy.⁴⁹ Cummings described Rothermere's Blackshirt campaign as another of his 'political idiocies' and noted that Beaverbrook, who he considered a much shrewder politician, had 'promptly and with a sickening thud thrown Fascism and all its works down the cellar steps.'⁵⁰ Reports of Mosley's speeches concentrated on expressions of dissent from the crowd and Mosley's plans to ensure a fascist government had complete power of action, untrammelled by parliamentary procedure.⁵¹

From the beginning, the *Manchester Guardian* regarded the BUF as a paper tiger and Mosley as a pinchbeck candidate for dictatorship.⁵² Its attitude to Mosley was clearly expressed; it did not matter what Mosley said or where he said it.⁵³ The paper was scornful of Rothermere's promotion of the BUF, referring to his previous ill-fated political ventures.⁵⁴ Reports of Mosley's speeches were neutral in tone, but headlines highlighted disorder and violence and large audiences were attributed to contingents of Blackshirts from outside the local area.⁵⁵ Opportunities to mock were regularly exploited.⁵⁶

Although Rothermere's support had gained the BUF increased press coverage, it is evident from its content that, except for Rothermere's own papers, particularly the *Mail* and the *Sunday Dispatch*, the British mainstream press regarded Mosley and the BUF as little more than a sideshow, of no real political significance. However, the BUF meeting at Olympia in June 1934 and the subsequent public reaction, coupled with growing distaste for developments in Germany, upped the political stakes.

Post Olympia: confrontation or dismissal?

In his earlier article Pugh recognised the variety and complexity of press responses to the violence at Olympia, and there is considerable common ground between his

evaluation of the Rothermere and Beaverbrook presses and that of Lawrence.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, some elements of his analysis are open to a different interpretation. His assessment of the Rothermere press from initial enthusiasm to polite disengagement fits well with the available evidence, as do his conclusions regarding the reasons for Rothermere's withdrawal of support, but his suggestion that as the *Mail* continued to report Mosley's speeches it was simply not promoting the BUF as blatantly as before could be more convincing.⁵⁸ As part of their coverage of current events, most of the mainstream press continued, intermittently, to report Mosley's speeches. This cannot be construed as even covertly promoting the BUF. However, the *Mail*, without ever mentioning the BUF, continued to criticise the Government for talking instead of taking action and on one occasion, in relation to increased aeroplane construction, demanded: 'When will the country discover some leader or organised party that will see things as they really are ...?'⁵⁹ Readers would no doubt be aware that the BUF shared the *Mail*'s belief that the Air Force needed to be greatly expanded.

From the start, the Rothermere press had reported clashes between fascists and anti-fascists as a Manichean struggle between fascism and communism, and this pattern continued throughout the 1930s. The most significant of these clashes was the Battle of Cable Street on 4 October 1936, when anti-fascist demonstrators prevented the BUF from marching along Cable Street, in Stepney.⁶⁰ The *Mail*'s headline over a report of the Battle of Cable Street read 'REDS ATTACK BLACKSHIRTS – Girls Among Injured.'⁶¹ The paper reported that when Mosley arrived he 'had a consultation with Sir Philip Game, Commissioner of Police. A decision was made to cancel the East End march ...' All the other mainstream papers reported that on his arrival Mosley was told by Game that the march was cancelled and there was no suggestion that Mosley was a party to the decision.⁶² The *Mail* appears to have inflated Mosley's significance. Throughout the report, anti-fascists are referred to as

'Communists', reinforcing the message that the BUF aimed to protect mainstream society from the perceived communist menace. Similarly, in October 1937, following disorder in Bermondsey during the BUF's fifth anniversary march the *Daily Mail* report referred to 'Reds' and 'Communists.'⁶³ On both occasions there was no mention of local opposition to the march and no editorial comment.

Although Rothermere had publicly distanced himself from the BUF in July 1934, he continued to meet Mosley socially, and as late as June 1939 he hosted a dinner party at which Mosley was encouraged to speak about how a national leader is found.⁶⁴ Nor did he cut all his political links to Mosley.⁶⁵ Rothermere used Ward Price as a conduit between Mosley and himself, and in July 1939 Ward Price attended a Mosley dinner party for BUF sympathisers and other pro-Nazi figures.⁶⁶ Rothermere had also introduced his protégée and confidante, Collin Brooks, to Mosley. Brooks kept in touch with Mosley and BUF officials, and his journal shows that in March 1938 he met Mosley for lunch to discuss the future of British fascism, during the course of which Mosley complained that nobody would report his meetings.⁶⁷ This was untrue, but his meetings were not reported as often as he thought they should be, possibly because the same issues were addressed at different locations and the speeches would have appeared repetitive to readers.

Pugh's assessment of the position of the Beaverbrook press is also largely consistent with the evidence. The reports relating to Olympia and the subsequent debate were complete, factual and neutral in tone.⁶⁸ The lack of any editorial comment was in keeping with the previously expressed advice that those wearing coloured shirts, of any hue, were not a serious concern. However, he neglects to mention that Low, in the *Evening Standard*, continued to produce anti-fascist cartoons, the most telling of which, *The Other Test Match*, showed a cricket pitch on which a heavily outnumbered team dressed in whites was being brutally assaulted by

Blackshirts while Mosley looked on, giving the fascist salute. A John Bull figure in the stands exclaims: 'I don't know what you think you're playing at, young man, but it certainly isn't cricket!'⁶⁹

Following the Battle of Cable Street, the *Express* praised the police and reiterated its commitment to democracy.⁷⁰ A week later it reported a largely peaceful march by communists and the attack on Jewish shops and passers-by by a 'gang of hooligans' shouting pro-Mosley slogans.⁷¹ The editorial column criticised 'Redshirt-Blackshirt tomfoolery' for diverting police resources every Sunday afternoon.⁷² The *Express* reacted in similar fashion to the riots in Bermondsey a year later, claiming that communist opposition to Mosley's fascists generated publicity for the fascists and incurred heavy police costs.⁷³

Unfortunately, the *Mirror* does not figure in the analysis of either Pugh or Lawrence. The reports of the Olympia meeting are sketchy and vaguely pro-Blackshirt. There is little mention of violence. Unlike most other mainstream papers the *Mirror*, when reporting the Home Secretary's response to events, concentrated on alleged communist violence. One strap-line referred to a 'THREATENING RED MOB' when the words actually used were 'organised Red mob.'⁷⁴ The paper continued to report Mosley's speeches and there was no editorial comment on either Olympia or the ending of Rothermere's support for the BUF.⁷⁵ Reports of meetings included photographs of a smiling Mosley, huge crowds, and female fascist marchers.⁷⁶ The tenor of the paper's response to Mosley and the Blackshirts swung between factual reporting and presenting a slightly exotic and possibly dangerous entertainment. In March 1935, as part of a series entitled 'If I was Dictator', the *Mirror* published an article by Mosley setting out the issues he regarded as needing prompt action. It advised readers to: 'Decide if you like him, because you can't be sure you won't have to.'⁷⁷ By 1936 the *Mirror* was less inclined to drape all Mosley's

opponents in the red flag, reports of disorder in the East End and in Bermondsey were phrased in terms of 'fascist' and 'anti-fascist', there were no references to 'Reds' or 'Communists.'⁷⁸ The only editorial comment followed Mosley's injury in Liverpool; readers were advised to avoid violence, which could create martyrs, and recommended to: 'Kill by silence and absence.'⁷⁹

Both Pugh and Lawrence pay scant attention to the *Herald*, grouping it with the liberal press. Pugh argues that Olympia merely confirmed the left-wing press in their hostility to the BUF, while Lawrence concludes that although the *Herald* was surprisingly even-handed in its initial reports it, like other left-wing papers, took advantage of the controversy to mount an anti-fascist propaganda campaign. Certainly, post Olympia, reports of BUF meetings and court cases in the *Herald* were more frequent, and concentrated on the hostility of the crowds, the Blackshirts' need for police protection, and violence allegedly committed by fascists.⁸⁰ However, editorial comment, again in line with Labour party policy, advised readers to keep away from fascist meetings and marches, as aggressive opposition generated more publicity and sympathy for fascism.⁸¹ Following the Battle of Cable Street the *Herald's* leader writer argued that while the fascists had no chance of success they provoked disorder and it was the duty of the Government to 'rid the country of this menace to the King's peace.'⁸² After the violence in Bermondsey and Mosley's injury in Liverpool the editorial column stressed again that using physical violence to fight fascism advertised fascism and allowed Mosley to appeal to public sympathy.⁸³

Pugh provides only a brief assessment of the liberal press' response to Olympia, though he does note the strong anti-Blackshirt bias in the *News Chronicle* report of the meeting. In contrast, Lawrence sees little difference in their coverage and that provided by the left-wing papers. Surprisingly, he describes the *News Chronicle* as adopting a low-key approach. While there is some similarity between

the line taken by the *Manchester Guardian* following Olympia and that of the *Herald*, there were distinct differences in the tone of reports and in editorial attitudes of the other Liberal papers.

The *Manchester Guardian* did cover the disturbances at Olympia, but its initial reports were reluctant to apportion blame.⁸⁴ The following day, however, the leader column criticised Mosley's methods.⁸⁵ A week later, concern was expressed regarding the BUF's semi-military character and there was also support for the Government's decision to consult the leaders of the major political parties regarding fascist disorder.⁸⁶ The paper applauded Rothermere's reasons for breaking with Mosley, but pointed to inconsistencies in his argument and criticised his judgment in attempting to turn the BUF into a Tory 'ginger group.'⁸⁷ Reports of BUF meetings continued to focus on disorder and violence, although some did include details of Mosley's speeches or policies.⁸⁸ In the days prior to the Battle of Cable Street the paper's London correspondent noted an increasing sense of tension as preparations to oppose the march were made.⁸⁹ There was no editorial enthusiasm for resistance, and reports of the disturbances were low-key.⁹⁰ The leader column praised the police action and stressed that ignoring Mosley's meetings and marches was more effective than disrupting them.⁹¹ However, the report of the disturbances in Bermondsey, a year later, conceded that forcing a change of route represented a moral victory for Mosley's more militant opponents.⁹²

The *News Chronicle* remained steadfast in its opposition to fascism, and was by far the most anti-fascist of the mainstream publications. The paper's leader-writers took every opportunity to remind readers that the British did not require or desire continental methods of government.⁹³ Coverage was not totally one-sided; there were report of attacks on fascists.⁹⁴ However, its reporting of the Olympia meeting was notably different from other papers surveyed, it was clearly anti-fascist, and there was

no mention of 'Communists.' Instead, the Special Correspondent praised the interrupters, who 'showed both courage and resource.' Mosley's big meeting 'had been killed dead by the carefully organised demonstration of English men and women who hate Fascism and all its works.'⁹⁵ The following day's editorial was forthright in its condemnation of the brutality, and rejected Mosley's assertion that the Blackshirt Defence Force was needed to secure free speech in Britain: 'The claim of an irresponsible private body to maintain by force what it holds to be order is a parody of the forms of law.'⁹⁶ Following Olympia, the *News Chronicle*'s attitude to the BUF hardened and by the end of the month the delegation of TUC and Labour party representatives to Sir Ian Gilmour was said by their industrial correspondent to have carried the 'fight against Fascist terrorism' to the Home Office.⁹⁷

References to acts of fascist terrorism increased in the aftermath of the Battle of Cable Street.⁹⁸ So concerned was the *News Chronicle* that it published calls by James Maxton, and by A. A. H Findlay, chairman of the TUC, for a popular front against fascism.⁹⁹ The leader column was also used to urge a popular front. Fascism was not perceived as a present threat to democracy but was thought to have the potential to develop into one if left unchecked.¹⁰⁰ By October 1937 the *News Chronicle* was more sanguine and argued that the best way to defeat Mosley was to ignore him as violent opposition garnered publicity and, if they were injured, public sympathy for the fascists.¹⁰¹

Pugh's analysis of the quality press concluded that Olympia had a positive result for the BUF as afterwards their meetings were more frequently reported. He also claims that the *Daily Telegraph*'s reporting of the event was sympathetic to the Blackshirts; this is strongly disputed by Lawrence who maintains that the *Daily Telegraph*'s stance was unequivocally anti-BUF.¹⁰² The evidence supports Lawrence's interpretation. The report published by the *Daily Telegraph* was a

neutral, factual account of the meeting, interruptions and ejections. It is not surprising that, being a Tory paper, it also reported the disturbances prior to the meeting and attributed them to communists, nor is it an indication of sympathy for the Blackshirts. That the report of the meeting was immediately followed by eyewitness testimony of Blackshirt violence suggests that the paper was not predisposed to the fascist cause.¹⁰³ For the *Telegraph*, fascism was as much to be deplored as communism and in an editorial the paper insisted that 'British political tradition must combine without thought of party to fight the spirit of the new violence from whichever side it comes.'¹⁰⁴ Only days later another editorial stressed that there was no doubt that the use of reasonable force had been gravely exceeded at Olympia and encouraged the Government to suppress any attempt to usurp Government functions, such as the preservation of order.¹⁰⁵ The *Telegraph* continued to provide its readers with factual reports of disturbances, including the Battle of Cable Street in 1936 and the barricading of streets in Bermondsey in 1937.¹⁰⁶

Pugh and Lawrence agree that the *Times* continued to adopt a lofty, almost supercilious, tone in its editorial comment on Olympia, though Pugh does not pay enough regard to the editorial's content which stressed that there was no place for fascism in Britain.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, Pugh's argument that in defending the principle of free speech the paper had softened its attitude to the Blackshirts is not convincing.¹⁰⁸ Like the *Telegraph*, the *Times* regarded both fascism and communism as undesirable. Following the Battle of Cable Street, the *Times* described the activities of both fascists and communists as 'a tedious and rather pitiable burlesque.'¹⁰⁹ The increased level of public violence was stated to be a public nuisance that required Government intervention, 'without violating the traditional canons of British Liberty.'¹¹⁰ As far as the *Times* was concerned the only place for the Blackshirt was in Madame Tussaud's.¹¹¹

The *Observer* said little about Olympia, probably due to the time constraints inherent in publishing a Sunday paper. Its editorial the following week censured Mosley, and while there was disapproval of 'organised attempts' to disrupt meetings, there was also a firm rejection of 'the Nazi technique' and 'the Nazi temper.'¹¹² A week later, the *Observer* reported a speech by Herbert Morrison in which he dismissed Mosley and the BUF on the grounds that the British public would not be fooled by 'spotlight, film star swank.'¹¹³ There was no editorial comment on Rothermere's decision to part-company with Mosley. The paper remained opposed to fascism, although its claim that the people of the East End were not hostile to BUF meetings suggests a limited perception of the East End's population.¹¹⁴ As the 1930s progressed the *Observer* expressed concern that Mosley's antisemitic tactics would lead to serious consequences in the East End.¹¹⁵

That the Olympia debacle had not benefited the BUF is further illustrated by the reaction of the BBC. Previously Mosley had taken part in a radio debate on fascism, and immediately after Olympia he had been given the opportunity to defend the actions of the BUF.¹¹⁶ There were also plans for him to take part in a series of broadcasts on constitutional issues, however, following debates on the violence at Olympia in Parliament and in the press, these were shelved and Mosley would not take part in a BBC radio broadcast again until 1968.¹¹⁷ Francis Hawkins did attempt to get Mosley included in a series of debates in 1939, but the BBC declined on the grounds that the debates were restricted to MPs from the main political parties.¹¹⁸ Later that year Mosley protested at what he called 'silly lies' broadcast internationally by the BBC that included suggestions that the BUF was less successful than the Communist party and that they were holding fewer meetings than previously.¹¹⁹

In contrast to the souring of relations with the BBC, there was little change in the way that cinema newsreels reported BUF activity. Although the BUF had claimed

that Jewish pressure had resulted in film of their meetings being cut from cinema programmes, reports continued in a neutral and detached style, and, as can be seen from footage shot in 1936 during the Battle of Cable Street, did not imply any criticism of Mosley and the BUF.¹²⁰

Although the mainstream press continued to print factual reports of BUF meetings, editorial comments were generally critical of the BUF and its methods. Mosley and the BUF frequently complained that the mainstream press was against them and there were repeated allegations that the press was under Jewish influence.¹²¹ Despite the BUF's assertions of conspiracy, Britain's mainstream press did not present a united front against fascism; each paper had a slightly different stance, and there were different gradations of anti-fascism. Broadly speaking, the quality press was opposed to Mosley and the BUF and was the most clearly anti-fascist. For some papers, particularly the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Times*, participating in a popular front against fascism, as advocated by the *News Chronicle* at the height of its anti-fascist campaign, would have given British fascism a prominence it did not deserve and might also have had implications for Britain's foreign affairs. If papers known to be closely allied to the Government's political aims had actively pursued an anti-fascist agenda it would have made Britain's already fraught diplomatic relations with Italy and Germany even more difficult. Certainly, those advocating a popular front did not suggest the inclusion of the Conservatives.¹²² The Tory papers regarded the BUF with disdain, seeing it as a nuisance rather than a threat, and had no objection to fascism as a continental phenomenon. The government of other countries was seen as no concern of Britain's, unless they posed a threat to international stability.¹²³ The response of the Tory press to events such as Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, the persecution of Jews and other minority groups in Germany, the annexation of Austria, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia show that, although some Tory papers expressed

regret, they were all opposed to any confrontation with the fascist regimes. Despite this tolerance of fascism beyond the Channel, its imposition in Britain was implacably opposed. The liberal papers perceived the fascist movement as more of a threat and were correspondingly more vocal in their opposition, with the *News Chronicle* being the most outspoken in this regard. Their anti-fascism was more ideologically based and extended to continental varieties. The *Herald* shared this opposition to fascism in all its forms, but, for tactical reasons was less vocal in its opposition to the British variety.

The popular press, with its tendency to embrace new trends, gimmicks and ‘stunts’ was more receptive to the novelty of fascism. Nevertheless, the *Express* regarded British fascism as a potential, though unlikely, threat to the Empire and, while against it in principle, generally ignored it. The *Mirror*, while not promoting fascism, rejected a united front against it.¹²⁴ Yet, by 1937 its opposition was clear and the paper can be counted amongst those anti-fascist papers that regarded violent opposition as counter-productive. Only the Rothermere press actively promoted fascism for a short period, an error of judgement based on Rothermere’s misreading of the situation and his misunderstanding of fascism’s revolutionary nature. It was not long before economic and political realities encouraged Rothermere to direct his papers to take a more neutral stance, although this did not extend to any criticism of, or opposition to, the BUF. The political violence and increasing antisemitism of the BUF appeared to mimic the European fascist movements and, as the 1930s drew to a close, this, coupled with the growing political tension in Europe, ensured that the British mainstream press, including the *Mail*, put aside any earlier misgivings regarding the efficacy of the parliamentary system and reinforced the message that there was no place in the mainstream social or political spectrum for British fascism.

A SUSTAINABLE SUBCULTURE OR RADICAL COUNTERCULTURE?

Given the comprehensive rejection of the majority of the mainstream media it is not surprising that the BUF developed its own infrastructure and that its members relied on the movement for more than political sustenance. Recent developments in the study of British fascism have referred to fascist subcultures, but have not defined the term or justified its use. Michael Spurr finds common ground between the study of post-war youth subcultures and the growth of British fascism between the wars, particularly in the case of the BUF.¹²⁵ Significant areas of similarity are said to be the development of mass society, social modernisation, social dislocation in the aftermath of war, an increased emphasis on generational perceptions of society, and a reliance on symbolic measures to reconcile contradictions and to generate cohesion within the group.¹²⁶ There is much in the cultural artefacts and activity of British fascists to support this analysis. Albert K. Cohen describes subcultures emerging as a group response to perceived problems in the surrounding or dominant culture to which they are unable or unwilling to adjust.¹²⁷ The response is gradual, 'a process of mutual exploration and joint elaboration of a new solution.'¹²⁸ The shared values of the subculture validate the beliefs of the individual group members and promote solidarity. The more the subculture invites the hostility of others, the more its members turn to one another for cooperation. In response to actual, perceived or anticipated hostility from those outside the subculture, its members may develop hostile and contemptuous attitudes towards those who reject their values.¹²⁹ Marvin E. Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti, in their analysis of violent behaviour, also discuss the way that differing values set subcultures apart from the dominant or parent culture, this prevents full integration, leading to a sense of isolation that reinforces the solidarity of the subculture.¹³⁰ Subcultures provide the means for individuals to share feelings of exclusion and create a sense of inclusion that builds up a corresponding

sense of identity.¹³¹ The significant divergence between the cultural perceptions of the British fascist press and the mainstream press, particularly the popular press, encouraged fascist groups to become insular and rely on the members of their own organisation for shared cultural experiences. In the BF and the IFL this was largely restricted to political meetings, paper selling, the wearing of political uniforms, the occasional dinner dance, and organised activities for children.¹³² Additionally the *Fascist Bulletin* did advertise fascist cigarettes and fascist ties, and there was a report on a camp for women fascists in August 1925.¹³³ In both movements the development of a subculture did not develop beyond the embryonic stage.

In the BUF the sense of solidarity and unity was bound up in the cult of the leader. Mosley was the central figure around whom the BUF revolved; they were Mosley's men.¹³⁴ Despite the claimed rejection of materialism, Gottlieb shows that the marketing of BUF merchandise and the commercialisation of the Mosley image was a central part of the BUF's propaganda drive.¹³⁵ Much of the BUF merchandise was directly related to Mosley, including reproductions of a sketch of the leader, a bronze plaque of the leader, a recording of Mosley speaking, and Chesterton's biography of Mosley, *Portrait of a Leader*.¹³⁶ Other merchandise included the BUF's own brand cigarettes, BUF diaries, Christmas cards and calendars, badges, cuff links, scarf pins, clips and brooches with flash in the pan emblem, playing cards with gold panels and black fasces or black panels with gold fasces, fascist notepaper, recordings of the BUF Male Voice Choir, sheet music for 'Mosley' and 'Britain Awake', and a photographic record of the BUF with the optimistic title *The British Union's March To Power!*¹³⁷

According to John Clarke *et al*, subcultures are distinctive enough to be identifiably different from the dominant culture, and are focussed around certain activities, specific values, uses of material artefacts and occupation of territorial

spaces.¹³⁸ In the case of the BUF the shared fascist experience was developed in a variety of ways. The BUF made effective use of ritual and symbols, which defined and expressed group identity, and showed distinctions and differences within the group. Mabel Berezin describes political ritual as generating meaning through repetition for both participants and observers; repetition also generates familiarity, which reinforces identity and solidarity through the sharing of the ritual experience.¹³⁹ Public spectacle in the form of marches and large public meetings such as those at Olympia or Belle Vue were intended to demonstrate fascist strength to those outside the movement and to generate a sense of belonging that would extend beyond the duration of the actual event.¹⁴⁰

Philip Coupland has written convincingly on the symbolic resonance of the black shirt.¹⁴¹ That members found meaning in the uniform can be seen from the closing paragraph of 'Rude Awakening,' a short story that described a nightmare about an England dominated by Jews; an awful vision that was swept away by the presence of a column of black-uniformed men marching along the street.¹⁴² Mosley described the black shirt as a 'symbol of faith' and 'the outward expression of manhood banded together in the iron resolve to save great nations from degeneration and decay.'¹⁴³ The cult status of Mosley was a unifying force, and descriptions of meetings at which Mosley spoke emphasise their theatrical and ritualistic format. Berezin considers the arrival of the leader an archetypal form of public ritual.¹⁴⁴ It was one Mosley exploited fully. Command of the streets and domination of certain areas, particularly in the East End of London, were territorial imperatives for the BUF. Mosley told Colin Brooks: 'It is the mastery of the streets which matters ...'¹⁴⁵ It was expected that members would demonstrate commitment to the BUF and active members served at least three nights a week selling the BUF papers, stewarding meetings, or training. Marches, street corner meetings and paper sales by uniformed

members demonstrated their distinctive presence. The effect of a heavy BUF presence on the streets is recorded in *Action* by a new member who had admired their discipline and fresh athletic Englishness, and felt impelled to join the movement.¹⁴⁶ As we have seen, the rhetoric of the BUF provided a validation of aggressive masculinity that was not in tune with mainstream perceptions of masculinity.

However, the theory of subculture is based on the concept of resistance to the dominant culture; membership of the subculture permits resistance to some aspects of the dominant culture while providing a strategy for remaining within it. Attempts at resolving the contradictions inherent in this process are undertaken at a symbolic level and are therefore destined to fail.¹⁴⁷ In cases where the values of a possible subculture do not merely differ from those of the dominant culture but are antithetical to them, it is more appropriate to consider the group as a counterculture.¹⁴⁸ Clarke *et al*, whose analysis is class based, argue that subcultures are predominately working class, while countercultures spring from the middle class and are thus strategically better placed to undermine or attack the disputed values of the dominant culture. The disaffiliation of a counterculture is said to be primarily based on ideological and cultural differences with the dominant culture. The counterculture attacks the institutions of the dominant culture and attempts to set-up elements of an alternative society.¹⁴⁹ Subcultures are often tolerated by the dominant culture, as they share some values and those that are different are not necessarily in opposition. Provided they do not cause disruptive conflict or disturb normal social relations there is no necessity for the dominant culture to take action against them.¹⁵⁰ Aggressive countercultures are likely to provoke a reaction.

During the mid to late 1930s, the BUF presented itself as a counterculture. It had adopted an antagonistic stance, proposing to enforce revolutionary change to the dominant culture, albeit by legal means if possible.¹⁵¹ The intention of the BUF was

to replace the mainstream, dominant culture with a completely fascist culture as shown in the plans for the corporate state. The existence of a BUF counterculture is supported by the development of a sophisticated infrastructure that employed full-time officials, and by the paramilitary organisation and outlook adopted by the BUF, epitomised by the segregated lifestyle and military discipline of the Defence Force. Up to 400 men lived and trained at Black House Headquarters, which had its own canteen and recreational facilities.¹⁵²

Gottlieb has noted the movement's attempt to create the cultural structure that would be necessary for the BUF's vision of the corporate state. This included arranging its own weddings and christenings.¹⁵³ The social life of members also revolved around the BUF. There were numerous sports teams competing in a variety of sports but they had little or no contact with teams outside the BUF. There were also BUF bands, orchestras and choirs.¹⁵⁴ Members could spend their leisure time within the Blackshirt environment. The BUF ran summer camps, although these were segregated after the first year.¹⁵⁵ If a holiday camp did not appeal there were 'Grand Blackshirt Lakeland Tours' available at moderate terms, or bed and breakfast in Brighton, South Devon, or Southsea.¹⁵⁶ Special terms were offered to BUF members at the Princes Marina Café in SW9.¹⁵⁷ *Blackshirt* readers were encouraged to buy a motor vehicle 'from fascist Roy Capell', to join the Blackshirt automobile club, and to purchase 'insurance from Blackshirts.'¹⁵⁸ Members even ran a BUF version of the Christmas fair, the 'Blackshirt Bazaar' selling perfume, cakes, jams, arts, crafts, toys, and flowers.¹⁵⁹ The BUF headquarters and branches also organised lectures, dinner dances, plays, and concerts.¹⁶⁰ Evening classes were also provided; physical training for men and self-defence for women. Mosley had plans to run a commercial radio station and to buy local mainstream newspapers.¹⁶¹ This level of organisation, coupled with its revolutionary aims, suggest the BUF was more than a subculture.

This is reinforced by the BUF's willingness to confront state institutions, for instance its unsuccessful championing of farmers in the 1934 'Tithe Wars.'¹⁶² At one farm they dug trenches four feet deep, organised a twenty-four hour patrol, barricaded a cart track, and set-up their headquarters in a chicken house flying the Blackshirt flag, all without the consent of the farmer concerned in the dispute. When challenged, their response was 'Fascists do not ask for permission.'¹⁶³ Eighteen fascists were later arrested and charged with causing public mischief.¹⁶⁴

The image of the BUF was one of aggressive masculinity and confrontation. The taint of violence surrounding BUF marches and meetings caused concern within the dominant culture. Fascist and anti-fascist clashes in the East End of London intensified, culminating in the Battle of Cable Street, where anti-fascists successfully halted a BUF march. Repeated violent incidents led to mainstream support for Government action to restrain politically-inspired aggression from fascist and communist groups, both of which were perceived as alien influenced and, while not a political menace, as disturbing the peace.¹⁶⁵ The Government responded with the Public Order Act (1936), which came into force in January 1937 and prohibited the wearing of uniforms associated with political organisations or objectives; quasi-military groups organised, trained or equipped to usurp the role of the police and armed forces, and the use or display of physical force to promote political objectives.¹⁶⁶

The introduction of the act, coupled with financial problems, led to a downscaling of operations and the beginnings of a more secretive, underground structure. Significantly, this was intensified when internments began and continued in the camps, showing the members commitment to the BUF's counterculture. In the Isle of Man camp, Tommy Moran organised the internal camp administration on fascist lines complete with what Graham Macklin described as a 'rudimentary fascist

police force.’¹⁶⁷ The underground organisation was maintained after the war, both when Mosley was in exile and after his return to Britain.¹⁶⁸ During the period discussed, the attitudes, aims and actions of the BUF indicate that its active members were operating as part of a counterculture.

CONCLUSION

Initially the majority of the mainstream press largely ignored the BUF, however during 1934 the increase in membership, Rothermere’s support and the heated public debate over the violence at Olympia led to heightened interest in the movement, spurring deliberate attempts by the mainstream media to situate the BUF outside of the mainstream. The continued association of the movement with violence in the reports of BUF activity was an effective mechanism for reinforcing the perception that fascism was not in accord with British values. While it would be overstating the case to describe this as a ‘united’ or ‘popular’ front against fascism, it could be seen as a *de facto* front for British democracy that contained distinct strands of anti-fascism within it.

The majority of mainstream newspapers urged their readers to ignore the BUF and this reinforced an existing tendency, consistent with fascism’s concept of the corporate state, with its drive to extend the role of the state to cover all aspects of society, to create a functioning counterculture. As we have seen, this included the fascistisation of religious ceremonies and cultural events, the provision of financial services, the organising of an extensive range of leisure and educational activities, and the retailing of a range of symbolic items glorifying Mosley as the great leader. Particularly for those men who lived in the Black House, it was possible to have very little contact with mainstream society, except for the time spent representing the movement on the streets or at public meetings.

¹ Extracts from this chapter will appear in “‘It certainly isn’t cricket!’— Media Responses to Mosley and the BUF” in Nigel Copsey & Andrzej Olechnowicz (eds), *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period* (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2010).

² Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918-39* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000), pp. 98, 160 & 187. Martin Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts!* (Jonathon Cape, London, 2005), pp. 149-50 & 167-9. Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain* (I. B Tauris, London, 1998), pp. 69 & 72.

³ Jon Lawrence, ‘Fascist Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Inter-War Britain: the Olympia Debate Revisited’, *Historical Research*, vol. 76, no. 192 (May 2003), pp.232-267; ‘Why Olympia Mattered’, *Historical Research*, vol. 78, no. 200 (May 2005), pp. 263-72. Martin Pugh, ‘The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate’ *The Historical Journal*, vol. xli (1998), pp 592-42; ‘The National Government, the British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate’ *Historical Research*, vol. 78, no. 200 (May 2005), pp. 253-62.

⁴ Pugh, *Hurrah*, p. 169.

⁵ Pugh, ‘The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate’, pp. 534-8.

⁶ For more details see Stephen Dorril, *Blackshirt: Sir Oswald Mosley and British Fascism* (London: Viking, 2006), pp. 295-301; Pugh, *Hurrah*, pp. 156-69.

⁷ For examples relating to fascist Italy see *Observer* 19 May 1929, p. 12; *Manchester Guardian*, 20 May 1930, p. 7 & 21 May 1930, p. 7; *Times*, 15 Mar 1933, p. 15; & *Daily Telegraph*, 18 Mar 1933. For Nazi Germany see: *Times*, 31 Jan 1933, p. 11; 3 Feb 1933, p. 11, 17 Feb 1933, p. 13; *Observer*, 23 Jul 1933, p. 15; & *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Sep 1933, p. 12.

⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 15 Jun 1925, p. 9; & 31 Jul 1925, p. 8. Other examples can be found at *Manchester Guardian*, 27 Apr 1925, p.13; 25 May 1925, p. 5; 29 Jul 1925, p. 9; 12 Oct 1927, p. 11; & *Times*, 16 Jun 1925, p. 18; 1 Sep 1925, p. 14; 24 Apr 1926, p. 16; & 1 Mar 1934, p. 7.

⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 7 Nov 1931, p. 14; 15 Sep 1936, p. 14; & 19 Sep 1936, p. 14. *Times*, 25 Nov 1933, p. 14; 27 Nov 1933, p. 11; 15 Aug 1936, p. 7; 22 Aug 1936, p. 15; & 19 Sep 1936, p. 15. *Daily Mirror*, 8 Jun 1932, p. 8; 7 Nov 1932, p. 3; 19 Oct 1933, p. 22; 25 Nov 1933, p. 3; 25 May 1934, p.14; 22 Sep 1936, p. 4; & 7 Apr 1937, p. 21.

¹⁰ Julie V. Gottlieb, 'Britain's New Fascist Men: The Aestheticization of Brutality in British Fascist Propaganda' in Julie V. Gottlieb and Thomas Linehan (eds), *The Culture of Fascism*, (I. B. Tauris, London, 2004), p. 85.

¹¹ Examples include reports of Mosley's fencing prowess and speeches unrelated to the BUF. *Times*, 14 Nov 1932, p. 8; 5 Dec 1932, p. 6; & 8 Dec 1932, p. 8. *Mirror*, 11 Feb 1933, p.4. The Mosleys also continued to feature in gossip and 'Court & Society' pages. *Times*, 21 Dec 1932, p. 15. *Mirror*, 21 Dec 1932, p. 15; 29 Dec 1932, p. 9; & 26 Jan 1933, p. 9. Cynthia Mosley generated a substantial amount of positive press coverage and her final illness and untimely death were treated with great sympathy. *Daily Express*, 15 May 1933, p. 1 & 17 May 1933, p. 10.

¹² *Sketch*, 11 Jan 1933, p. 57.

¹³ *Mail*, 30 Sep 1932, p. 12. S.J. Taylor *The Great Outsiders Northcliffe, Rothermere and the Daily Mail* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1996), p. 281, describes Price as a close friend of Mosley.

¹⁴ Nicholas Mosley, *Rules of the Game / Beyond the Pale* (Pimlico, London, 1998), pp. 230, 233, & 275.

¹⁵ For examples see, *Times*, 25 Oct 1932, p. 16. *Mirror*, 13 Mar 1933, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Mirror*, 25 Aug 1933, p. 10.

¹⁷ Pugh, *Hurrah*, pp.48 & 168.

¹⁸ *Blackshirt*, 6-12 Apr 1934, pp. 1 & 4; 20-26 Apr 1934, p.4; 27 Apr – 3 May 1934, p. 1; 4-10 May 1934, p. 3. See also, *Fascist Week*, 26 Jan – 1 Feb 1934, p.1; 9-15 Mar 1934, p.7; & 6-12 Apr 1934, p. 5. When reporting public meetings, *Fascist Week* gave more coverage to India than the *Blackshirt*. *Fascist Week*, 6-12 Apr 1934, p.3; 13-19 Apr 1934, p. 5; 4-10 May 1934, p. 3; & 11-17 May 1934, p. 3.

¹⁹ *Mail*, 19 Jan 1934, p. 12. *Blackshirt*, 26 Jan – 1 Feb 1934, p. 2.

²⁰ Taylor, p. 281.

²¹ Cited in Taylor, p. 283.

²² *Express*, 17 Jan 1934, p. 1.

²³ Anne Chisholm and Michael Davie, *Lord Beaverbrook: a Life* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1992), p.366.

²⁴ *Express*, 22 Feb 1934, p. 10. See also 13 Mar 1934, p. 10, for similar editorial comments. For examples of reports of court cases see 3 Mar 1934, p. 7; 12 Mar 1934, p. 7; & 15 Mar, p. 7.

²⁵ See the British Cartoon Archive at <http://opal.ukc.ac.uk/cartoonx/cgi/ccc.py>.

-
- ²⁶ *Mirror*, 3 Mar 1934, p. 12; 27 Mar 1934, p. 14.
- ²⁷ *Mirror*, 22 Jan 1934, p. 12
- ²⁸ *Mirror*, 23 Apr 1934, p. 2.
- ²⁹ *Mirror*, 13 Jul 1934, p. 10.
- ³⁰ The gossip column treated with levity the possibility of a Blackshirt candidate in the North Hammersmith by-election and a Blackshirt wedding was reported as an interesting oddity. *Mirror*, 8 Mar 1934, p. 11; 15 Mar 1934, p. 11; & 14 Mar 1934. News that the BUF had taken delivery of six armoured vans produced a bustle of activity by the *Daily Mirror*, including interviews with the manufacturer of the vehicles and other experts. Details were sent to Scotland Yard. The tone of the report implied that the vans were possibly illegal, and if they were not, then they should be. *Mirror*, 9 Jan 1934, p. 5.
- ³¹ *Herald*, 17 Jan 1934, p. 8. Oliver Baldwin had been a supporter of Mosley's New Party, see Pugh, *Hurrah*, p. 118.
- ³² *Herald*, 25 Jan 1934, p. 10.
- ³³ *Herald*, 1 Jan 1934, p. 10; 20 Jan 1934, p. 10; & 25 Jan 1934, p. 6. For an example of fascist response to Swaffer see *Blackshirt*, 11-17 Nov 1933, p. 2.
- ³⁴ *Herald*, 22 Jan 1934, p. 11.
- ³⁵ Lawrence, 'Fascist Violence', p. 258.
- ³⁶ *Times*, 19 Jan 1934, p. 15. See also editorial 26 Jan 1934, p. 13, that refers to Mosley and Cripps as 'germs of an infection that may easily spread if not immediately suppressed.'
- ³⁷ *Telegraph*, 19 Feb 1934. *Times* 7 Apr 1934, p. 7; 20 Jan 1934, p. 3.
- ³⁸ *Times*, 22 Jan 1934, p. 14.
- ³⁹ *Times*, 7 Feb 1934, p. 4; 9 Apr 1934, p. 14; & 23 Apr 1934, p. 16.
- ⁴⁰ *Observer*, 21 Jan 1934, p. 17.
- ⁴¹ *Observer*, 28 Jan 1934, p. 10; & 13 May 1934, p. 20. See also, *Times*, 14 May 1934, p. 16.
- ⁴² *News Chronicle*, 2 Jan 1934, p. 6.
- ⁴³ *News Chronicle*, 9 Jan 1934, p. 8.
- ⁴⁴ *News Chronicle*, 11 Jan 1934, p. 3.
- ⁴⁵ *News Chronicle*, 15 Jan 1934, p. 1; & 16 Jan 1934, p. 2. Skeels was quickly dropped by the UBP on account of his racial and religious views. *News Chronicle*, 17 Jan 1934, pp. 1 & 2; & 25 Jan 1934, p. 10.

-
- ⁴⁶ *News Chronicle*, 11 Jan 1934, p. 8.
- ⁴⁷ *News Chronicle*, 16 Jan 1934, p. 8. On the same page, A. J. Cummings 'Political Peep-Show' also refers to the 'singularly unattractive phenomenon' offered by Rothermere.
- ⁴⁸ *News Chronicle*, 17 Jan 1934, p. 2; & 18 Jan 1934, p. 1. Letters from readers opposed to Rothermere's espousal of fascism were also printed, see 18 Jan 1934, p. 7.
- ⁴⁹ *News Chronicle*, 23 Jan 1934, p. 8; & 27 Jan 1934, p. 8.
- ⁵⁰ *News Chronicle*, 23 Jan 1934, p. 8.
- ⁵¹ *News Chronicle*, 22 Jan 1934, p. 1.
- ⁵² *Manchester Guardian*, 30 Sep 1932, p. 8; & 14 Mar 1933, p. 8.
- ⁵³ *Manchester Guardian*, 27 Apr 1933, p. 7.
- ⁵⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Jan 1934, p. 8. See also 18 Jan 1934, p. 8, which compares Rothermere unfavourably to Beaverbrook.
- ⁵⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 22 Jan 1934, p. 6; 19 Mar 1934, p. 6; 9 Apr 1934 p. 11; 16 Apr 1934, p. 18; 23 Apr 1934, p. 17; & 27 Apr 1934 p. 9. For court cases relating to BUF members see, 21 Feb 1934, p. 12; 27 Feb 1934, p. 18; 3 Mar 1934, p. 8; 15 Mar 1934, p. 14; 27 Mar 1934, p. 5; & 10 Apr 1934, p. 10.
- ⁵⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 23 Jan 1934, p. 7; 25 Jan 1934, p. 7; 10 Apr 1934, p. 7; 9 Jun 1934, p. 11; & 13 Jun 1934, p. 9. The satirical magazine *Punch* also found Mosley an easy target, see *Punch*, 2 Nov 1932. p. 479; & 27 Dec 1933, pp. 727-8.
- ⁵⁷ Pugh, 'The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', pp. 534-8.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 535-6.
- ⁵⁹ *Mail*, 24 Jul 1934, p. 10.
- ⁶⁰ Pugh, *Hurrah*, pp.172-3.
- ⁶¹ *Mail*, 5 Oct 1936, p. 13.
- ⁶² *Mail*, 5 Oct 1936, p. 13; *Mirror*, 5 Oct 1936, p.1; *Telegraph* 5 Oct 1936, p. 13; *News Chronicle*, 9 Oct 1936, p. 1; *Express*, 4 Oct 1937, p. 1; *Manchester Guardian*, 5 Oct 1936, p. 11; & *Times* 5 Oct 1936, p. 12.
- ⁶³ *Mail* 4 Oct 1937, p. 13.
- ⁶⁴ N. J. Crowson (ed.), *Fleet Street, Press Barons and Politics: The Journals of Collin Brooks* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998), p. 250.
- ⁶⁵ Dorril, p. 329.
- ⁶⁶ Dorril, p. 460
- ⁶⁷ Dorril, pp. 353, 397, & 431. Crowson, pp. 81, 122-3, 190, 199-200, & 234-5.

-
- ⁶⁸ *Express*, 8 Jun 1934, pp. 1 & 2; 9 Jun 1934, p. 1; & 12 Jun, pp. 1 & 2.
- ⁶⁹ *Evening Standard*, 13 Jun 1934 p.10.
- ⁷⁰ *Express*, 5 Oct 1936, p. 12.
- ⁷¹ *Express*, 12 Oct 1936, p. 1.
- ⁷² *Ibid*, p. 12.
- ⁷³ *Express*, 4 Oct 1937, p. 12.
- ⁷⁴ *Mirror*, 15 Jun 1934, p. 4.
- ⁷⁵ *Mirror*, 13 Jun 1934, p. 23; & 13 Jul 1934, p. 10.
- ⁷⁶ *Mirror*, 10 Sep 1934, p. 28.
- ⁷⁷ *Mirror*, 11 Mar 1935, p. 12.
- ⁷⁸ *Mirror*, 5 Oct 1936, pp. 1 & 32; & 4 Oct 1937, p. 3.
- ⁷⁹ *Mirror*, 13 Oct 1937, p. 15.
- ⁸⁰ Except for the fascists, the reports do not mention the political or religious affiliations of those involved in the fighting. *Daily Herald* 12 June 1934, p. 7; 15 June 1934, p. 7; 18 June 1934, p. 11; 22 Jun 1934, p. 3; 28 Jun 1934, p. 11; 29 Jun 1934, p.11; 13 Jul 1934, p. 1; & 19 Jul 1934, p. 9.
- ⁸¹ *Herald*, 1 Oct 1936, p. 10; & 11 Oct 1937, p. 10.
- ⁸² *Herald*, 15 Oct 1936, p. 10.
- ⁸³ *Herald*, 11 Oct 1937, p. 10.
- ⁸⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 8 Jun 1934, p. 6.
- ⁸⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 9 Jun 1934, p. 12.
- ⁸⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 15 Jun 1934, p. 10.
- ⁸⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 20 Jul 1934, p. 10.
- ⁸⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 11 Jun 1934, p. 9; 15 Jun 1934, p. 11; 22 Jun 1934, p. 11; 23 Jun 1934, p. 13; 28 Jun 1934, p. 11; 12 Jul 1934, p. 18; 13 Jul 1934, p. 11; 21 Jul 1934, p. 11; & 30 Jul 1934, p. 11.
- ⁸⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 3 Oct 1936, p. 12.
- ⁹⁰ *Manchester Guardian*, 5 Oct 1936, p. 11.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 10.
- ⁹² *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Oct 1937, p. 9.
- ⁹³ *News Chronicle*, 4 Jun 1934, p. 10; & 6 Jun 1934, p. 10. A J Cummings also continued to nip at Rothermere's heels, suggesting, just before the meeting at Olympia, that his Lordship 'could easily be frightened out of his support of the

Blackshirts if he thought the game would not pay.' *News Chronicle*, 5 Jun 1934, p.

10.

⁹⁴ *News Chronicle*, 4 Jun 1934, p. 1; 11 Jun 1934, p. 1. There is no condemnation of those hostile to the fascists, and the merest hint of satisfaction in the tenor of the report describing fascists having to seek the protection of park-keepers and the police.

⁹⁵ *News Chronicle*, 8 Jun 1934, p. 1.

⁹⁶ *News Chronicle*, 9 Jun 1934, p. 8.

⁹⁷ *News Chronicle*, 21 Jun 1934, p.13. Readers' accounts of violence at Olympia appeared under the headline 'BLACKSHIRT TERRORISM' see 12 Jun 1934, p. 9.

⁹⁸ *News Chronicle*, 9 Oct 1936, pp. 1 & 2; 12 Oct 1936, pp. 1, 2 & 21, & 17 Oct 1936, p. 7.

⁹⁹ *News Chronicle*, 8 Sep 1936, pp. 10 & 13.

¹⁰⁰ *News Chronicle*, 12 Sep 1936, p. 6.

¹⁰¹ *News Chronicle*, 12 Oct 1937, p. 10.

¹⁰² Pugh, 'British Union of Fascists', p. 537. See also Pugh, 'The National Government', p. 256.

¹⁰³ *Telegraph*, 8 Jun 1934, pp. 15 & 16. Further eyewitness accounts were published on 9 Jun 1934, pp. 13 & 14; & 11 Jun 1934, pp. 13 & 14.

¹⁰⁴ *Telegraph*, 12 Jun 1934, p. 12. The previous day's editorial had made clear that there was no room in Britain for 'Private Armies.' 11 Jun 1934, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ *Telegraph*, 15 Jun 1934, p. 14.

¹⁰⁶ *Telegraph* 5 Oct 1936, p. 13; & 4 Oct 1937, pp. 15 & 16.

¹⁰⁷ *Times*, 8 Jun 1934, p.15.

¹⁰⁸ Pugh, 'British Union of Fascists', pp. 537-8. See also Pugh, 'The National Government', p. 256.

¹⁰⁹ *Times*, 5 Oct 1936, p. 13. See also, 8 Oct 1936, p. 15.

¹¹⁰ *Times*, 12 Nov 1936, p. 15.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Observer* 17 Jun 1934, p. 16. The same issue (p. 18) also included a report of Stanley Baldwin's description of Fascism as 'ultramontane Conservatism'; pushing the tenets of Conservatism to their limits and combining them with an alien, continental desire 'to suppress opposition and to proceed by dictatorial methods.'

¹¹³ *Observer*, 24 Jun 1934, p. 18.

¹¹⁴ *Observer*, 4 Oct 1936, p. 22.

-
- ¹¹⁵ *Observer*, 18 Oct 1936, p. 26. The paper's special correspondent was a little too ready to accept the reasoning that one cause of Mosley's antisemitism was the Jews' suspicion of the BUF.
- ¹¹⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Mar 1933, pp. 9 & 10; & 9 Jun 1934, p. 13.
- ¹¹⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 15 Mar 1933, p. 10; & 16 Mar 1933, p. 10. *News Chronicle*, 9 Jun 1934, p. 1. See also Robert Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley* (London: Macmillan, 1990, 3rd edn), pp. 370-1.
- ¹¹⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 17 Feb 1939, p. 11 & 21 Feb 1939, p. 12.
- ¹¹⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 22 Jul 1939, p. 12.
- ¹²⁰ *Blackshirt*, 4-10 Nov 1933, p. 1. For news reel footage see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AQDOjQGZuA>.
- ¹²¹ *Blackshirt*, May 1933, p. 1; 16 Jun 1933, pp. 2 & 3; 4-10 Nov 1933, p. 4; 2 Nov 1934, p. 2; & 5 Oct 1934, p. 2. *Action*, 12 Dec 1936, pp. 4, 8 & 10; 6 Mar 1936, p. 4; 19 Mar 1936, p. 4; 2 Apr 1936, p. 7; & 9 Apr 1936, p. 7.
- ¹²² A *News Chronicle* editorial had proposed an alliance between the Liberal party and the Labour party in a popular front against fascism. *News Chronicle*, 12 Sept 1936, p. 6. Others, including Findlay, Maxton and Eleanor Rathbone had called for a broader based common front encompassing the ILP, the Labour party, the Liberals and the Communists. *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Aug 1936, p. 5; 8 Sep 1936, p. 13; 5 Nov 1936, p. 14. *News Chronicle*, 8 Sep 1936, p. 10.
- ¹²³ *Times*, 20 Feb 1933, p. 11 & 22 Mar 1933, p. 15.
- ¹²⁴ *Mirror*, 24 Sep 1936, p. 11.
- ¹²⁵ Michael Spurr, "'Living the Blackshirt Life': Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940" *Contemporary European History*, vol. 12, no. 3 (2003), p. 321.
- ¹²⁶ Spurr, "Living the Blackshirt Life", pp. 306, 309, & 321. Spurr, 'Playing for Fascism', pp. 359-376. Graham D. Macklin, 'Co-opting the Counter Culture: Troy Southgate and the National Revolutionary Faction', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 39, no. 3 (2005), pp. 324-326.
- ¹²⁷ Albert K. Cohen, 'A General Theory of Subcultures' in Ken Gelder (ed.) *The Subcultures Reader* (Routledge, London, 2005, 2nd ed.), pp. 50-4.
- ¹²⁸ Cohen, p. 54.
- ¹²⁹ Cohen, pp. 57-8.

-
- ¹³⁰ Marvin E. Wolfgang & Franco Ferracuti, *The Subculture of Violence* (Tavistock, London, 1967), p.99.
- ¹³¹ Peter J. Martin 'Culture, Subculture and Social Organisation' in Andy Bennett & Keith Kahn Harrison (eds.), *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2004), p. 33.
- ¹³² *Fascist Bulletin*, 7, 15 Aug 1925, p. 1; & Nov 1925, p. 5.
- ¹³³ *Fascist Bulletin*, 15 Aug 1925, p. 1; 24 Oct 1925, p. 4; & 31 Oct 1925, p. 4.
- ¹³⁴ See John Charnley *Blackshirts and Roses* (Brockingday, London, 1990), p. 238.
- ¹³⁵ Julie Gottlieb 'The Marketing of Megalomania: Celebrity, Consumption and the Development of Political Technology in the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 41, no. 35 (2006), pp. 35-55. Although no sales figures are given, it would seem that the popularity of the merchandise was not as great as had been hoped as in 1936 there was a clearance sale of fascist playing cards, circle and flash notepaper and envelopes, and black shirts. *Blackshirt*, 5 Sep 1936, p. 3.
- ¹³⁶ *Action*, 29 Oct 1938, p. 5. This represented a bargain price compared to the six shillings charged for a two-record set of Mosley's speech at the Albert Hall in 1934. Gottlieb, 'The marketing of Megalomania', p. 42. *Blackshirt*, 20 Jun 1936, p.5; 27 Jun 1936, p. 5. *Action*, p. 26 Nov 1938, p. 7.
- ¹³⁷ *Blackshirt*, 2 Nov 1934, p. 7; 16 Nov 1934, pp. 3 & 9; 30 Nov 1934, p. 8; 7 Dec 1934, p.4; 2 Aug 1935, p. 7; 28 Feb 1936, p. 2.; 21 Nov 1936, p. 8; & 22 Jan 1938, p. 8. *Action*, 26 Nov 1938, p. 7.
- ¹³⁸ John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class' in Stuart Hall & Tony Jefferson (eds.) *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (Routledge, London, 2006, 2nd ed), p. 7.
- ¹³⁹ Mabel Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self: the Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1997), p. 250.
- ¹⁴⁰ Berezin argues that in the case of the Italian Fascist regime public spectacle was intended to create bonds of solidarity and emotional attachment, likening the piazza to a fascist cultural cathedral. Berezin, p. 30.
- ¹⁴¹ Coupland 'The Black Shirt in Britain', pp. 102-4.
- ¹⁴² *Action*, 3 September 1936, p. 14.
- ¹⁴³ *Fascist Week*, 24 Nov 1933, p. 5.
- ¹⁴⁴ Berezin, p. 249.
- ¹⁴⁵ Crowson, pp. 122-3.

-
- ¹⁴⁶ *Action*, 17 Oct 1936, p. 15.
- ¹⁴⁷ Clarke *et al*, p. 35.
- ¹⁴⁸ Wolfgang & Ferracuti, pp. 100-1.
- ¹⁴⁹ Clarke *et al*, p. 45.
- ¹⁵⁰ Wolfgang & Ferracuti, pp. 100-1.
- ¹⁵¹ See for example Sir Oswald Mosley 'On To Fascist Revolution' in *Blackshirt*, Feb 1933, pp. 1 & 4.
- ¹⁵² Robert Benewick, *The Fascist Movement in Britain* (Allen Lane, London, 1972), p. 96. According to Spurr up to 200 core members of the Defence force lived at the BUF HQ. Spurr, "Living the Blackshirt Life", p.315.
- ¹⁵³ Julie V. Gottlieb, 'Britain's New Fascist Men: The Aestheticization of Brutality in British Fascist Propaganda', in Julie V. Gottlieb & Thomas Linehan (eds), *The Culture of Fascism* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2004), p. 89. Gottlieb, 'The Marketing of Megalomania', p. 50. Fascist symbols were also incorporated into funerals. *Blackshirt*, 11-17 May 1934, p.3.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Action*, 29 Oct 1938, p. 5.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Blackshirt*, 1 Apr 1933, p. 3; 26 June 1937, p. 2; 3 Jul 1937, p.2; & 17 Jul 1937, p. 2.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Blackshirt*, 2 Aug 1935, p. 2; & 18 Oct 1935, p. 2.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Blackshirt*, 30, Aug 1935, p. 11 Blackshirts were also welcome at Joe Smiths and the Marsham Café. *Blackshirt*, 18 Oct 1935, p. 2.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Blackshirt*, 6 Sep 1935, p. 3; & 20 Sep 1935, p. 7; & 28 Feb 1936, p. 2.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Blackshirt*, 21 Nov 1936, p.2.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Blackshirt*, 14 Oct 1934, p. 9; 16 Nov 1934, p. 9; 18 Oct 1935, p. 2; 7 Feb 1936, p. 7; 11 Apr 1936, p.2; 17 Apr 1937, p. 2; 1 May 1937, p. 2; 8 May 1937, p. 2; & 20 Jan 1938, p. 5 & 7.
- ¹⁶¹ Gottlieb, 'The Marketing of Megalomania', pp. 51-2.
- ¹⁶² *Express*, 19 Feb 1934, p. 7; 21 Feb 1934, p. 6; & 27 Feb 1934, p. 7. *Telegraph*, 10 Feb 1934, p. 12; 15 Feb 1934, p. 14; 17 Feb 1934, p. 14; 19 Feb 1934, p. 12; 21 Feb 1934, p. 10; 22 Feb 1934, p. 10; & 27 Feb 1934, p. 7.
- ¹⁶³ *Telegraph*, 15 Feb 1934, p. 14.
- ¹⁶⁴ *Telegraph*, 19 Feb 1934, p. 12.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Times*, 2 Nov 1936, p. 15.

¹⁶⁶ The UK Statute Law Database:

<http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?LegType=All+or>. [22 Mar 2010]

¹⁶⁷ Graham Macklin, *Very Deeply Died in Black: Sir Oswald Mosley and the Postwar Reconstruction of British Fascism* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2007), p14.

¹⁶⁸ Trevor Grundy, *Memoir of Fascist Childhood*, (Heinemann, London, 1998), pp. 13, 21, 24, 25, 26, & 29-30. The Grundy family were committed fascists who concealed their allegiance from the community they lived in, although photos of Mosley were displayed prominently in their home. The Grundys also exchanged the fascist salute and used the slogan 'PJ' fascist shorthand for 'Perish Judah.' When Mosley first spoke to his supporters following his return from Ireland those attending the meeting took a circuitous route to avoid being followed.

CONCLUSION: In from the Cold?

There has been a tendency, when considering the politics of the inter-war period, to view the British fascists as marginal entities and, in the case of the IFL particularly, as cranks situated firmly on the lunatic fringe.¹ Even the relatively more successful BUF is regarded as being confined to the political margins.² Additionally, there is a persistent perception of Mosley as a taboo figure, beyond the pale of mainstream society.³ In part, this perception of Mosley and the BUF is fostered by the failure of the British fascist movements to shake off the ‘foreign’ taint of continental fascism. Recent developments in the historiography have done much to demonstrate the strong British roots that were as important to their development as the European influences.⁴ Yet the words of one anti-fascist hold true and British fascists are still regarded as having ‘offended against the common values of decency.’⁵ This thesis has made a detailed study of the mainstream and fascist press in order to assess the extent to which these perceptions are true; is British fascism judged to be beyond the pale or should it be brought in from the cold?

Additionally this study responds to Lunn’s challenge to take a more imaginative approach to the scrutiny of British fascism and adopts a broader focus than is usually found in the historiography. By examining British fascism within the context of the mainstream it offers a more sophisticated and nuanced approach that provides a clearer understanding of its dynamic location within a society whose attitudes and values were developing in response to a period of rapid social change and turbulent international politics.

The extent to which British fascism can be seen as part of the mainstream, or as an extension of it, differs depending on the issue and period considered, as the

mainstream itself was, and is, not static. It is probable that even more variation would be found in a study of the provincial press. The studies of Devon and Newcastle by Todd Gray and Nigel Todd, respectively, show a range of local response to the BUF from support, through indifference to outright hostility.⁶ The attitude of local newspapers is a potentially interesting area for future research that would add more to our understanding of the ways in which fascism and the mainstream interrelate.

Clearly there were some issues that demonstrated a considerable gap between what was acceptable in the mainstream and the views advocated by British fascists. Attitudes towards antisemitism were the most notable in this category. While there was, undoubtedly, antisemitism at all levels of British society, its overt expression was unacceptable and it did not manifest more strongly than the first level of the model described in chapter one. Specifically, there were some instances of stereotypical characterisation of Jews but, in the newspapers examined, such instances were rare.

Although the degree of antisemitic content in the fascist press varied, the British fascists were represented at all three levels of the model, and Kushner's definition of 'exclusionist' antisemitism is appropriate here as each of the three movements wanted to exclude the Jews from society in some way. Of the three groups studied, the IFL exhibited the most radical expressions of antisemitism. Under the influence of Leese, its antisemitic policy developed rapidly and within eighteen months had moved from the outer to the inner circle of the mode. From 1930 antisemitism informed all areas of the IFL's propaganda output and by 1935 the IFL was able to contemplate the most efficient form of genocide without any qualms.⁷ Conversely, the antisemitism of the BF and the BUF varied, depending on the extent to which it was sanctioned by the organisations' leadership at any particular time. For

both these organisations, antisemitism was restricted to the two outer circles of the model and did not encompass biological-racial antisemitism. While the antisemitism of the BF and BUF drew on existing antipathy to Jews, and could, therefore, be seen as an extension of mainstream views, its overt expression and the adoption of exclusionist policies clearly placed it outside the mainstream.

Although, with regard to British Jews, there was no significant antisemitic content in the national newspapers studied here, articles in the popular press relating to 'foreign' Jews often portrayed them as undesirable and a threat to the nation, particularly to the unemployed. The attitudes of British fascists towards refugees were expressed in tones comparable to the Tory popular press, whose use of exclusionist rhetoric in relation to 'non-British' Jews suggests British fascists were not estranged from significant strands of mainstream opinion. However, despite the similarities, the underlying motivation differed. British fascists were motivated by ideological imperatives and their opposition to refugees was expressed in antisemitic terms. Heavily influenced by their proprietors, the *Express* and the *Mail* were motivated by fear and self-interest, but their opposition did not employ antisemitic vocabulary, instead these papers used more general terms that applied equally to all refugees regardless of religion or ethnic origin. For this reason, the application of Kushner's terms exclusionary or conservative antisemitism to the refusal of the popular press to countenance the arrival of refugees in Britain is problematic. Admittedly, the vast majority of the refugees were Jewish, and, on one occasion, concern was expressed that accepting large numbers of Jews in Britain might lead to an increase in antisemitism, but, generally, it was not the Jewishness of the refugees that the *Express* and *Mail* perceived as a threat. Instead they focussed on the economic impact, particularly in relation to the unemployed, and their reaction to the

refugee issue was consistent with their isolationist attitude and their vehement opposition to the provision of financial or military aid to European governments such as Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, and even extended to defence agreements with France.⁸

At least one expression of editorial opinion in the *Express* appears to support Kushner's theory of liberal antisemitism, in that it can be interpreted as advocating that refugees should make every effort to assimilate to avoid provoking antisemitism, yet there is a lack of supporting evidence in the rest of the mainstream press, which raises the question of how much pressure to assimilate was applied to Jews living in Britain by the mainstream, and how much was the result of Jewish community leaders taking pre-emptive action out of fear of provoking an increase in antisemitism. More research is needed to answer this question.

British fascists were inherently anti-communist, as were much of the mainstream. References in the fascist press to the Spanish Civil War employed terminology that was often analogous to that of the *Mail* and, less often, to the *Express*, but the majority of the mainstream press offered a less heightened tone in their coverage, regardless of their stance on the war. The fascist press were more aggressive in their denunciations of communism than the mainstream newspapers and regularly employed terms that de-humanised or demonised communists. In relation to British politics, the Labour party and trade unions were ridiculed and accused of betraying the working class by the fascist press, which often conflated communism, socialism and the Labour party in an attempt to tap into mainstream opposition to communism. During election campaigns, the Tory elements of the mainstream also adopted the tactic of blurring the boundaries between the Labour party, socialism and communism. Yet, even at the height of election fever there was no suggestion that

voting Labour was other than a legitimate, if dangerously unwise, choice. The evidence from the national press, therefore, supports Worley's argument that the Labour party had been accepted as part of mainstream politics. In contrast, the British fascists' rejection of the left, which was linked to their anti-democratic vision for a nation that allowed no parliamentary opposition, situated the British fascists in the political margins.

There was a considerable area of overlap between the mainstream and fascist press in relation to foreign policy. Disillusionment with the League of Nations was frequently expressed by the Tory popular press and, less often, by the *Telegraph*. While the *Express* and the *Mail* came close to expressing the distrust of the League promulgated in the fascist press, this was never articulated in antisemitic terms. There were also similarities between these papers and the fascist press in relation to isolation, the Empire and tariff reform. As we have seen, the evidence presented here does not endorse Lewis' assessment of BUF foreign policy. The similarity of the Government's policy of appeasement to that of the BUF and the success of the peace campaign brought the BUF closer to the mainstream. Yet its commitment to the prospect of a fascist Europe prevented the BUF from altering its foreign policy in response to international developments. Every German expansion had to be welcomed and justified, despite growing public unease. Eventually the BUF found itself once more on the political margins as even the most recalcitrant organs of the mainstream press recognised the failure of appeasement and the inevitability of war.

This thesis builds on the groundbreaking work of Durham, Gottlieb, Linehan, Spurr and Stone, among others, in identifying the cultural concerns of British fascists, and locates them in the wider context of inter-war society.⁹ In their diagnosis of society's ills British fascists drew on the concept of cultural pessimism, which was a

significant strand in mainstream European thinking at the time. Yet, their prescribed remedies did not attract sizeable popular support. While the cultural pre-occupations of the British fascists found a more muted expression in the mainstream press, these represented only aspects of a much wider perception of British society. The Tory quality press, while fighting a rearguard action to preserve the status quo, did not share the cultural pessimism of the British fascists and, significantly, the popular press exhibited positive signs of cultural optimism and an encouraging attitude to social change and innovation. The fascists' relentless and discordant avowals that decadence and decline were everywhere in evidence, together with its insistence on the centrality of the state in all areas of life were not compatible with mainstream commitment to a private life and the role of voluntary civil organisations.

The evidence discussed here shows that the response of the mainstream press to British fascism was more varied than previous analyses by both Pugh and Lawrence suggests.¹⁰ Apart from the support of the Rothermere press between January and July 1934, the BUF received little positive coverage in the mainstream press. Rothermere's support generated more press interest in the BUF, but this largely translated into opposition. While there was no universal concerted campaign against the BUF, press reports of their activities tended to focus on public order issues, in particular violence at BUF meetings and court cases. The reports in the mainstream press, especially in the liberal and left-wing papers, identified the BUF as political extremists and, therefore, located them outside of the mainstream. As Kushner argues in relation to post-war fascist groups, the inter-war fascists are perceived as 'other' and kept at a distance, yet there are elements of fascination and admiration mixed with the repulsion and disgust that can lend a certain ambiguity to mainstream rejections of fascism, though, perhaps, not to the extent that Kushner

implies.¹¹ The sense of isolation from the mainstream was intensified by the insistence of the national press that BUF provocation should be ignored by readers. This encouraged the BUF to see itself as separate from the dominant, liberal culture; this separation was further encouraged by the movement's infrastructure and the range of BUF political, social and business activities that enabled members to submerge themselves in a BUF lifestyle. While Spurr argues that the BUF operated as a subculture, the evidence presented here demonstrates that the BUF had created a functioning counterculture.¹²

This thesis has established that there were significant areas of discursive overlap between the fascist and mainstream press. There is a strand within the historiography that argues that British fascist policies were developments of earlier mainstream ideas.¹³ The evidence discussed here confirms that much of fascist thinking had mainstream roots and could be considered an extension of mainstream attitudes. Yet, what this thesis also reveals is that even in areas that appear to show a convergence of views, such as attitudes to refugees or appeasement, the ideological imperative of the British fascists was not shared by the mainstream. It is clear that there are substantial links between mainstream attitudes and those of the fascist press, yet at crucial points the linkage breaks down and attitudes diverge or find different forms of expression. The ideology and policy of the British fascists clearly comprise elements of mainstream thinking and they can, therefore, be described as being 'of the mainstream', but they were constrained by the rigidity of their ideology and by their refusal to tolerate dissent, which limited their appeal to the wider public. The perception of these movements presented by the majority of the mainstream press clearly situates them at the margins. In their response to what they saw as a press conspiracy, the BUF increasingly defined itself in opposition to the mainstream, but

its ambition was always to be the mainstream. Not just part of it but the whole, leaving no room for alternate or opposing expressions.

Finally, it is the anti-democratic nature of their ideology, coupled with the virulent exclusionist antisemitism that came to taint every aspect of their policies that condemns the fascists of inter-war Britain to remain in the cold. Even so, they should not be frozen out of our understanding of the mainstream entirely. This thesis has demonstrated that there are elements of the extreme contained within the mainstream, and democratic societies need to acknowledge this and be vigilant against the encroachment of the forces of illiberalism.

¹ Richard Thurlow, 'The Failure of British Fascism' in A. Thorpe (ed.), *The Failure of Political Extremism in Inter-War Britain* (University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1989), p.67.

² Robert Benewick, *The Fascist Movement in Britain* (Allen Lane, London, 1972), p.305.

³ Nicholas Mosley, *Rules of The Game / Beyond the Pale* (Pimlico, London, 1994), p. ix. Martin Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts! Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between the Wars* (Jonathan Cape, London, 2005), p. 315. Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain* (I. B. Tauris, London, 1998), pp280-1.

⁴ Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism: 1918-39 Parties, Ideologies and Culture* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000), pp. 13-8. Michael A. Spurr, '“Playing For Fascism”: Sportsmanship, Antisemitism and The British Union of Fascists', *Patterns Of Prejudice*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2003, pp. 362-3. Dan Stone, 'The English Mystery, the BUF, and the Dilemmas of British Fascism', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 25, (June 2003), pp. 336-8.

⁵ Nigel Todd, *In Excited Times: The People Against the Blackshirts* (Berwick Press, Whitley Bay, 1995), p.13.

⁶ Todd Gray, *Blackshirts in Devon* (The Mint Press, Exeter, 2006), pp.108-11. Todd, 26, 34, 37, & 75-6.

⁷ *Fascist*, February 1935, p. 2

⁸ *Express*, 2 Feb 1938, p. 10; 5 Mar 1938, p. 10; 8 Mar 1938, p. 10; 14 Mar 1938, p. 10; 17 Mar 1938. *Mail* 14 Mar 1938, p. 12; 1 Apr 1939, p. 12.

⁹ Martin Durham, 'The Home and the Homeland: Gender and the British Extreme Right', *Contemporary British History* vol. 17, no. 1, (Spring 2003), pp. 67-80; Martin Durham, 'Gender and the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 27, no. 3, (Jul 1992). pp. 513-529; Julie Gottlieb & Thomas Linehan (eds), *The Culture Of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2004); Linehan, *British Fascism*; Spurr, 'Playing For Fascism', pp. 360-376; Stone, 'The English Mistery', pp. 336-358.

¹⁰ Jon Lawrence, 'Fascist Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Inter-War Britain: The Olympia Debate Revisited', *Historical Research*, vol. 76, no. 192 (May 2003), pp.232-267; Jon Lawrence, 'Why Olympia Mattered', *Historical Research*, vol. 78, no. 200 (May 2005), pp. 263-72. Martin Pugh, 'The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', *The Historical Journal*, vol. xli (1998), pp 592-42. Martin Pugh, 'The National Government, The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', *Historical Research*, vol. 78, no. 200 (May 2005), pp. 253-62.

¹¹ Tony Kushner, 'The Fascist as "Other"? Racism and Neo-Nazism in Contemporary Britain', *Patterns Of Prejudice*, vol. 28, no. 1 (1994), p. 44

¹² Michael Spurr, "'Living The Blackshirt Life": Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940', *Contemporary European History*, vol. 12, no. 3, (2003), pp. 306, 309, & 321.

¹³ Linehan, *British Fascism*, pp.13-8. Stone, 'The English Mistery', pp. 336-8. Neil Nugent 'The Ideas Of The British Union Of Fascists' in Neil Nugent & Roger King (eds), *The British Right* (Saxon House, Westmead, 1977), pp. 145. Martin Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts!*, pp. 5-20. G. C. Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right 1918-1939* (Croom Helm, London, 1986), pp. 115-21.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Newspapers and Magazines

Mainstream:

Daily Express

Daily Herald

Daily Mail

Daily Mirror

Daily Telegraph

Manchester Guardian

News Chronicle

Nottingham Guardian

Observer

Punch

Sunday Dispatch

Sunday Express

Times

All the newspapers referred to in this thesis are held in the British Library Newspaper Collection at Colindale, or are available online from the following digital archives:

Times Digital Archive, 1785-1985 at

<http://www.gale.cengage.com/DigitalCollections/products/Times/>

Daily Mirror Digital Archive at <http://www.arcitext.com/arcitext/index.html>

Guardian Digital Archive at <http://archive.guardian.co.uk>

Fascist:

Action

Blackshirt

British Fascism

British Lion

Fascist

Fascist Bulletin

Fascist Week

All of the Fascist journals cited here were accessed using Teesside University's microfilm collection, or at the British Library, or Sheffield University's Special Collections and Archives Department.

Books

Memoirs:

Booker, J. A. *Blackshirts-on-Sea* (Brockingday, London, 1999).

Charnley, John *Blackshirts and Roses* (Brockingday, London, 1990).

Grundy, Trevor, *Memoir of Fascist Childhood*, (Heinemann, London, 1998).

Leese, Arnold Spenser, *Out Of Step: Events in the Two Lives of an Anti-Jewish Camel-Doctor* (Arnold S. Leese, Guildford, 1947).

Mosley, Oswald, *My Life* (Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, London, 1968).

Ward Price, G., *Extra-special Correspondent* (George G. Harrop, London, 1957).

Fascist Policy:

Mosley, Oswald, *Tomorrow We Live British Union Policy 1938* (Greater Britain Publications, London, 1938).

Mosley Oswald, *The Greater Britain* (BUF, London, 1932).

Joyce, William, *Twilight Over England* (no publication details) originally published in Berlin in 1940.

Journals

Kitson, Arthur, 'What Will He Do With It', *The National Review*, (December 1924), pp. 535-54.

Williamson, Hugh Ross, 'Youth's Alternative: Fascism or Communism', *Everyman*, 6 Apr 1934,

Other

M-O A, TC62 Box 1 A

M-O A, TC62 Box 1 C

Both held at the Mass Observation Archives at the University of Sussex.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Books

- Aldcroft, Derek H., *The British Economy Volume 1 The Years of Turmoil 1920-1951* (Wheatsheaf, Brighton, 1986).
- Baker, David, 'The Extreme Right in the 1920's: Fascism in a Cold Climate, or "Conservatism with Knobs on"?' in Cronin, Mike (ed.), *The Failure of British Fascism* (Macmillan, London, 1996), pp. 12-28.
- Backes, Uwe, *Political Extremes: A Conceptual History from Antiquity to the Present* (Routledge, London, 2010),
- Benewick, Robert, *Political Violence and Public Order* (Penguin Press, London, 1969).
- Bennett, Andy & Harrison, Keith Kahn (eds.) *After Subculture: Critical studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2004).
- Bennett, Oliver, *Cultural Pessimism: Narratives of Decline in the Postmodern World* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2001).
- Berezin, Mabel *Making the Fascist Self: the Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1997).
- Billig, Michael, *Banal Nationalism* (Sage, London, 1995).
- Billig, Michael, *Fascists: A Social Psychological View of the National Front* (Academic Press, London, 1978).
- Bingham, Adrian, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004).
- Bourke, Joanna, *Dismembering the Male* (Reaktion Books, London, 1996).
- Brown, Michael (ed.), *Approaches to Antisemitism: Context and Curriculum* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1994),
- Brustein, William I., *Roots of Hate* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003).
- Buchanan, Tom, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991).
- Bullock, A *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (Oldhams Books, London, 1964).
- Burleigh, Michael & Wippermann, Wolfgang, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991).
- Burnham, Lord, *Peterborough Court: The Story of the Daily Telegraph* (London, Cassell & Company Ltd, 1955).

Bury, J. B., *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origins and Growth* (Cosimo, New York, 2008).

Cato, *Guilty Men* (Victor Gollancz, London, 1940).

Cesarani, David (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, (Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford, 1990).

Chisholm, Anne and Davie, Michael, *Lord Beaverbrook: A Life* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1992).

Clancy, M. T., *Early Medieval England* (Folio, London, 1997),

Copsey, Nigel, *Anti-fascism in Britain* (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2000).

Cockett, Richard, *Twilight of Truth* (George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1989).

Cronin, Mike (ed.), *The Failure of British Fascism* (Macmillan, London, 1996).

Cross, Colin, *Fascists in Britain* (Barrie & Rockliff, London, 1961).

Crowson, N. J. (ed.), *Fleet Street, Press Barons and Politics: The Journals of Colin Brooks 1932-1940* (University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 1998).

James Curran & Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility* (Glasgow, Fontana, 1981).

Defries, Harry, *Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews 1900-1950* (Frank Cass, London, 2001).

Doerr, Paul W., *British Foreign Policy 1919-1939* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998).

Dorril Stephen, *Blackshirt: Sir Oswald Mosley and British Fascism* (Viking, London, 2006).

Eatwell, Roger, *Fascism: A History* (Vintage, London, 1996).

Eley, Geoff, (ed.) *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany 1870-1930* (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1996).

Endelman, Todd M., *The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000* (University of California Press, Berkely, 2002),

Evans, Richard J., *The Coming of the Third Reich* (Penguin, London, 2003).

Ferguson, Niall, *Empire: How Britain made the Modern World* (Allen Lane, London, 2003).

Gelder, Ken (ed.), *The Subcultures Reader* (Routledge, London, 2005, 2nd ed.)

Gilbert, Martin, *A History of the Twentieth Century Volume Two: 1933-1951* (HarperCollins, London, 1998).

- Gloversmith, Frank (ed.) *Class, Culture and Social Change* (Harvester Press ltd, Brighton, 1980).
- Gottlieb, Julie V. & Thomas Linehan (eds), *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2004).
- Gottlieb, Julie V., *Feminine Fascism: Women in Britain's Fascist Movement* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2003).
- Graves, Robert & Hodge, Alan, *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain 1918-1939* (Hutchinson, London, 1940).
- Gray, Todd, *Blackshirts in Devon* (The Mint Press, Exeter, 2006).
- Griffin, Roger (ed.), *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (Arnold, London, 1998).
- Griffin, Roger, *The Nature of Fascism* (Routledge, London, 1991).
- Griffiths, Richard, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933-39* (Constable, London, 1980).
- Hall, Stuart & Jefferson, Tony (eds.) *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (Routledge, London, 2006, 2nd ed).
- Hamilton Peter, (ed.), *Max Weber: Critical Assessments, vol. I* (Routledge, London, 1991).
- Hayes, Paul, *Fascism* (George Allen & Unwin, London 1973).
- Herf, Jeffrey, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, culture and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984).
- Hobsbawm Eric, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (Penguin, London, 1994).
- Holmes, Colin, *A Tolerant Country?* (Faber & Faber, London: 1991).
- Holmes, Colin, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* (Edward Arnold, London, 1979).
- Holmes, Colin, (ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society*, (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1978).
- Israel Pocket Library, *Anti-Semitism* (Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem, 1974).
- Katz, Jacob, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism 1700-1933* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1980).
- Keen, M. H., *England in the Later Middle Ages* (Folio, London, 1997).
- Kershaw, Ian, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987)

- Kidd, A. & Roberts, K. (eds), *City, Class and Culture* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985).
- Knightley, Phillip, *The First Casualty* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, London, 1975),
- Krippendorff, Klaus, *Contact Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology* (Sage, London, 2004, 2nd ed.).
- Kushner, Tony, *We Europeans? Mass-Observation, 'Race' and British Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2004).
- Kushner, Tony & Valman, Nadia (eds), *Remembering Cable Street: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Society* (Valentine Mitchell, London, 2000)
- Kushner, Tony & Lunn, Kenneth (eds), *Traditions of Intolerance* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1989).
- Lebzelter, Gisela C., *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939* (Macmillan, London, 1978).
- Levack, Brian P., *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (Longman, London, 1995, 2nd ed.).
- Levy, Richard S., *Antisemitism in the Modern World* (D. C. Heath, Lexington, 1991).
- Lewis, D. S., *Illusions of Grandeur* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1987).
- Light, Alison, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars*, (Routledge, London, 1991).
- Lindemann, Albert S., *Esau's Tears* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997).
- Linehan, Thomas, *British Fascism 1918-1939: Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000).
- Linehan, Thomas P., *East London for Mosley: The British Union of Fascists in East London and South-West Essex 1933-40* (Frank Cass, Abingdon, 1996).
- Locke, Terry, *Critical Discourse Analysis* (Continuum, London, 2004).
- London, Louise, *Whitehall and The Jews 1922-1948*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000).
- Lunn, Kenneth & Thurlow, Richard C. (eds), *British Fascism* (Edward Arnold, London, 1980).
- Mangan, J. A. (ed.), *Superman Supreme: Fascist Body as Political Icon – Global Fascism* (Frank Cass, London, 2000).
- Mathias, Peter, *The First Industrial Nation: The Economic History of Britain 1700-1914* (Methuen, London, 1983, 2nd ed.);

- Morell J. E., 'Arnold Leese and the Imperial Fascist League: The Impact of Racial Fascism' in Lunn & Thurlow, *British Fascism*, (Edward Arnold, London, 1980), pp. 57-76.
- Mosley, Nicholas, *Rules of the Game / Beyond the Pale* (Pimlico, London, 1998).
- Mosse, George L. *Nationalism and Sexuality* (University of Wisconsin Press, London, 1985).
- Mowat, Charles Loch, *Britain Between The Wars: 1918-1940* (Methuen, London, 1955).
- Noakes J. & Pridham, G. (eds.), *Nazism 1919-1945 Volume 2: State, Economy and Society 1933-1939* (Exeter University Press, Exeter, 1995).
- Nugent, Neil and King, Roger (eds) *The British Right* (Saxon House, Westmead, 1977).
- Parker, R A C, *Chamberlain and Appeasement* (Macmillan, London, 1993).
- Payne, Stanley G., *A History of Fascism 1914-45* (UCL Press, London, 1995).
- Pelling, Henry, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (Macmillan, London, 1972, 4th edn).
- Preston, Paul, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (Fontana Press, London, 1996).
- Pugh, Martin, *We Danced All Night: A Social History of Britain Between the Wars* (Bodley Head, London 2008).
- Pugh Martin, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts! Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between the Wars* (Jonathon Cape, London, 2005).
- Pugh, Martin, *The Making of Modern British Politics* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1982).
- Renton, Dave, *Fascism: Theory and Practice* (Pluto, London, 1999).
- Richardson, John E., *Analysing Newspapers* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2007).
- Riff, David et al, *Analysing Media Messages: Using Quantative Content Analysis in Research* (Lawrence Erlbaum. Mahwah, 2005).
- Roberts, Andrew, *The Holy Fox: The Life of Lord Halifax* (Phoenix, London, 1997).
- Rock, William R., *Appeasement on Trial* (Archon Books, Hamden, 1966).
- Rubinstein, William D., *Israel, the Jews, and the West* (The Social Affairs Unit, London, 2008).
- Rubinstein, William, *The Myth of Rescue* (Routledge, London, 1997).

Seidman, Steven, 'Modernity, Meaning, and Cultural Pessimism in Max Weber' in Hamilton, Peter (ed.), *Max Weber: Critical Assessments, Volume 1* (Routledge, London, 1991).

Semmel, Bernard, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought 1895-1914* (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1960).

Sharf, Andrew, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule* (Oxford University Press, London, 1964).

Shelmerdine, Brian, *British Representations of the Spanish Civil War* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2006).

Sherman, A. J., *Island Refuge: Britain and the Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939* (Frank Cass, Ilford, 1994, 2nd ed.).

Simpson, John Hope, *Refugees: A Review of the Situation Since September 1938* (Oxford University Press, London, 1939).

Skidelsky, Robert, *Oswald Mosley* (Papermac, London, 1990).

Skidelsky Robert, *Politicians and the Slump: The Labour Government of 1929-1931* (Macmillan, London, 1967).

Spengler, Oswald, *The Decline of the West*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000).

Stevenson, John and Cook Chris, *Britain in the Depression Society and Politics 1929-39* (Longman, Harlow, 1994).

Stevenson, John, *British Society 1914-1945* (Penguin Books, London, 1984).

Stone, Dan, *Responses to Nazism in Britain 1933-1939* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2003).

Stone, Dan, *Breeding Superman* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2002).

Taylor, A. J. P., *England 1914-1945* (Folio, London, 2000).

Taylor, A. J. P., *The Origins of the Second World War 1919-1939* (Folio, London, 1963).

Taylor, S.J., *The Great Outsiders: Northcliffe, Rothermere and The Daily Mail* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1996).

Thorpe, A. (ed.), *The Failure of Political Extremism in Inter -War Britain* (Exeter University, Exeter, 1989).

Thurlow, Richard, *Fascism in Modern Britain* (Sutton, Stroud, 2000).

Thurlow, Richard, *Fascism in Britain* (I. B. Tauris, London, 1998).

The History of the Times vol. iv part II (Written and published at the office of the *Times*, London, 1952).

- Todd, Nigel, *In Excited Times: The People Against the Blackshirts* (Berwick Press, Whitley Bay, 1995).
- Turner, David, *Fascism and Anti-Fascism in the Medway Towns 1927-40* (Kent Anti-Fascism Committee, Rochester, 1993).
- Wasserstein, Bernard, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Leicester University Press, London, 1999, 2nd ed.).
- Webber, G. C., 'Intolerance and discretion: Conservatives and British fascism, 1918-1926' in Kushner and Lunn (eds), *Traditions of Intolerance* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1989), pp. 155-72.
- Webber, G. C., *The Ideology of the British Right 1918-1939* (Croom Helm, London, 1986).
- Weber, Robert Philip, *Basic Content Analysis* (Sage., London, 1990).
- Wodak, Ruth & Meyer, Michael, 'Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory' in Wodak & Meyer (eds), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (Sage publications, London, 2009, 2nd edn),
- Wolfgang, Marvin E. & Ferracuti, Franco, *The Subculture of Violence* (Tavistock, London, 1967).
- Worley, Matthew, *Labour Inside the Gate* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2005).
- Wrench, John Evelyn, *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (Hutchinson, London, 1955).
- Zakim, Leonard P. & Ditchek, Janice, *Confronting Anti-Semitism* (Ktav, Hoboken, 2000).

Theses

- Morell, J. E., *The Life and Opinions of A. S. Leese* (M.A. University of Sheffield, 1975).
- Geiger, David M., *British Fascism as revealed in the British Union of Fascists Press* (PhD thesis, New York University, 1963).

Journals

- Biddis, Michael D., 'Migrants, Minorities, and Mosleyites', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* vol. 4, no. 1 (1981), pp. 110-13.
- Coupland, Philip M., "'Left-Wing Fascism' in Theory and Practice: The Case of the British Union of Fascists', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2002), pp. 38-61.

- Coupland, Philip M., 'The Blackshirted Utopians', *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 32, no. 2 (April, 1998), pp. 255-72.
- de Beaugrande, 'Critical Discourse Analysis: History Ideology, Methodology', *Studies In Language And Capitalism*, no. 1 (April 2007), pp. 29-56.
- Durham, Martin, 'The Home and the Homeland: Gender and the British Extreme Right', *Contemporary British History* vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 67-80.
- Durham, Martin, 'Gender and the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Jul 1992), pp 513-529.
- Garside, W. R., 'Party Politics, Political Economy and British Protectionism, 1919-1932', *History*, vol. 83 (1998), pp. 49-57.
- Gottlieb, Julie, 'The Marketing of Megalomania: Celebrity, Consumption and the Development of Political Technology in the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 41 no. 35 (2006), pp. 35-55.
- Griffin, Roger, 'Fascism is more than reaction', *Searchlight* (September 1999), pp. 24-6.
- Kushner, Tony, 'The Fascist as 'Other'? Racism and Neo-Nazism in Contemporary Britain', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 28, no. 1 (1994), pp. 27-45.
- Kushner, Tony, 'Beyond the Pale? British Reactions to Nazi Anti-Semitism, 1933-39', *Immigrants and Minorities*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1989), pp. 143-60.
- Lawrence, Jon, 'Why Olympia Mattered', *Historical Research*, vol. 78, no. 200 (May 2005), pp. 263-72.
- Lawrence, Jon, 'Fascist Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Inter-War Britain: The Olympia Debate Revisited', *Historical Research*, vol. 76, no. 192 (May 2003), pp. 232-267.
- Little, Douglas, 'Britain and the Spanish Civil War', *The Journal of Modern History* vol. 71, no. 4 (December 1999), p. 940-2.
- Macklin, Graham D., 'Co-opting the counter culture: Troy Southgate and the National Revolutionary Faction' *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 39, no. 3 (2005), pp. 301-326.
- Moore-Colyer, Richard, & Conford, Philip, 'A "Secret Society"? The Internal and External Relations of the Kinship in Husbandry, 1941-52', *Rural History* vol. 15, no. 2 (2004), pp.189-206.
- Pugh, Martin, 'The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate' *The Historical Journal*, vol. xli (1998), pp. 592-42;

- Pugh, Martin 'The National Government, the British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate' *Historical Research*, vol. 78, no. 200 (May 2005), pp. 253-62.
- Renton, Dave, 'Fascism is more than an ideology' in *Searchlight* (August 1999).
- Ruotsila, Markku, 'The Antisemitism of the Eighth Duke of Northumberland's the Patriot, 1922-1930', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 39, no.1 (2004), pp. 71-92.
- Spurr, Michael A., "'Living the Blackshirt Life': Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940", *Contemporary European History*, vol. 12, no. 3 (2003), pp.305-322.
- Spurr, Michael A. "'Playing for fascism": sportsmanship, anti-Semitism and the British Union of Fascists' *Patterns of Prejudice*, (Vol. 37, No. 4, 2003) pp. 360-376.
- Stone, Dan, 'The English Mistery, the BUF and the Dilemmas of British Fascism', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 75, no. 2 (June 2003), pp. 336-358.
- Thurlow, Richard, 'The "Jew-Wise": Dimensions of British Political Anti-Semitism, 1918-39', *Immigrants & Minorities*, vol. 6 (March 1987), pp. 44-65.
- Thurlow, R., 'Anti-Nazi Anti-Semite: The case of Douglas Reed', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 18 no. 1 (1984) pp 23-34.
- Thurlow, Richard, 'Authoritarians and Populists on the English Far Right', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 10 (March-April 1976), pp. 13-20.
- Webber, G. C. , 'Patterns of Membership and Support for the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 19 (1984), pp. 575-606.
- Webster, Charles, 'Health, Welfare and Unemployment During the Depression', *Past and Present*, vol. 109 (1985), pp. 204-230.
- Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina, 'Building A British Superman: Physical Culture In Interwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 41 no. 4 (2006), pp 595-610.

Online sources

www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box31/t297e02.htm

Jonathon Green, 'McNeile, (Herman) Cyril (1888–1937)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34810>. [18 Aug 2007].

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/oct/23/bnp-nick-griffin-question-time>.

Kaeckenbeeck, G., 'The Character and Work of the Arbitral Tribunal of Upper Silesia' Transactions of the Grotius Society, Vol. 21, Problems of Peace and War, Papers Read before the Society in the Year 1935, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1935), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/743063>.

Marrus Michael, 'The Theory and Practice of Anti-Semitism', *Commentary*, vol. 74, no. 2 (August 1982), pp. 38-42.

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewarticle.cfm/the-theory-and-practice-of-anti-semitism-6592?mode=addview>

Mosley, Oswald, *The Greater Britain –Extracts*,
www.oswaldmosley.com/downloads/free-ebooks.htm.

Pendlebury, Alyson, *Gilbert Frankau*, 'The Literary Encyclopaedia' Nov 2002.

<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=5205>

<http://www.seftondelmer.co.uk/>.

<http://semiotics.nured.uowm.gr/pdfs/Beaugrande.pdf>

F. H. Shera, 'Hadow, Sir (William) Henry (1859–1937)', rev. David J. Golby, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2006. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33631>. [23 Mar 2010].

Stubbs, John O., 'Garvin, James Louis (1868–1947)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33345>

The UK Statute Law Database:

<http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?LegType=All+or>. [22 Mar 2010]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AQDOjQGZuA>.